

Smoke

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Ocean City, set up designated smoking areas on the boardwalk according to Mayor Edward Mahaney. Others set up small smoking areas on the beach, but Councilwoman Terri Swain and Mahaney were still in agreement with Fiocca and Murray that there should be no smoking at all on the beach or promenade in Cape May.

"We don't want to be the 'City of No', but we do want to accommodate the vast majority of people," Wichterman said. "There are a lot more non-smokers than smokers

now."

Mahaney told Monzo he would like to see the same no-smoking policy in the park areas as well. Bruce MacLeod said he could only imagine the Washington Street Mall would be next on the list for a smoking ban. Mahaney recommended they just try the smoking ban on the beach and promenade for now.

"We'll see how it works out," Mahaney said.

Resident Bernie Haas said during public comment, council banning smoking on the beachfront wasn't necessary since they all agreed there were fewer smokers than

ever before.

"I just want to go on the record as saying as a citizen of Cape May – and I don't smoke – I have no problem with someone smoking on a beach. If they are sitting next to me, I have no problem moving my chair," he said.

"To now impose another regulation that says you can't do something in the city of Cape May – I think is counter-intuitive, meaning it's counterproductive to the city's 'welcome mat to the world' as a tourist attraction," he said.

Utility

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grams, a portion of the accommodations tax, which brings in about \$1 million each year, and rental fees from the new Convention Hall.

However, Mahaney said the \$10.5 million for the construction of Convention Hall should not be placed in the new utility, because the figure is too large. He believes it should remain in the current fund's debt service.

He said he would like the city tourism utility to gradually take on the responsibility for raising revenue and funding its operations, rather than the entire burden being put on it all at once, saying that set up the utility for instant failure. Mahaney also asked that the Tourism Commission be eliminated by ordinance, and that the city establish the Tourism Advisory Committee.

The committee would be made up of residents, representatives from business and

tourism related groups, and even military groups, such as the Coast Guard, Mahaney said. He referred to the committee as an "umbrella group, where all the roots come together."

He said the marketing and tourism funds would be raised through an assessment on mercantile license fees, as they are for the Tourism Commission. The Tourism Commission has a \$63,000 budget funded from a fee added to the cost of a mercantile license.

Taking all this into consideration, City Auditor Leon Costello said, as a ballpark figure, the tourism utility would raise around \$500,000. He said it would not be able to spend more than that. He said as the utility grows and matures, it would be allowed to make a contribution to the city's current fund for debt service on Convention Hall.

His \$500,000 prediction was based on past revenue streams from the recreational

programs in the city. He said none of the other revenues can be accurately predicted, but \$500,000 was a very reasonable goal.

"We are certain we will make that," Costello said. "This has been well planned and thought out."

Monzo said there are four city ordinances that will need to be altered in order to establish the new utility. Mahaney said he has been working closely with Costello, Monzo and City Manager Bruce MacLeod to make sure this utility would be successful and efficient for the city. Mahaney said he'd like to see the utility in place for the start of 2012.

"We have a lot to do before Dec. 31," he said.

MacLeod said in order to do so, an ordinance would need to be established and introduced by the Nov. 1 meeting. The public hearing and adoption would be held Dec. 6.

Whipple

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the same out here, it all received a lot of marketing attention," he said.

He said seeing first hand, the economic impacts of cities like Las Vegas made him realize marketing and communications was the right career for him. As for his new position in Cape May, Whipple said he is giving most of his attention to Convention Hall at this point.

"The building of Convention Hall is the primary focus right now," he said. "This is going to be a great economic development tool for the city. I see the building functioning as a community center with recreational activities, business conferences, performing arts and entertainment, exhibits, festivals – those sorts of things."

He said local groups like the Chamber of Commerce, the Mid-Atlantic Center for Arts and Humanities (MAC) and the Kiwanis Club will host events there. Whipple expects to see dance competitions, theater productions, class reunions, religious conferences and product shows and weddings to be held at the hall as well.

"The view from the Convention Hall is beautiful,

so we expect a fair amount of weddings and reunions to be held there," he said. "Once it's all added up, it's a lot of events and activities to offer visitors and local residents."

Whipple said because of the wooden floor and wide-open space in the plans for Convention Hall, the facility can be easily used as a roller skating rink.

"It's all very exciting. The opportunities are limitless," he said.

With the city's possibility of selling a record number of beach tags in 2011, reaching over \$2 million in revenue, and a big increase in room tax revenue as well, Whipple said the city seems to be in good shape with regard to tourism, despite the struggling economy.

"It seems we're defying the trends we hear about in other areas," he said. "Hopefully, Convention Hall will help us even more."

He said the city has partnered with other organizations like the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Cape May, the Cape May County Chamber of Commerce and the State Department's Division of Travel and Tourism to promote Cape May as worldwide attraction. Whipple said it's fairly

easy to bring in local venues and businesses as partners as well, because merchants and groups in the area obviously want a high amount of tourism in the area to continue.

He said there have been a lot of people visiting the construction site on a daily basis, walking by and checking on the progress of the facility. He said in upcoming weeks as the walls go up, the city will be giving potential customers hardhat tours of the building.

"There's clearly a lot of support. I think it's exciting for people to walk by and see the construction, waiting for the new Convention Hall."

Whipple said the hall would mostly be marketed through a web-based strategy, along with the social media, because it seems to be the most effective in today's world of technology. He said he is looking forward to working with the city and marketing Cape May so its longtime tradition of tourism would continue in future years.

"I just want to make this tourism based area a year round attraction," he said.

'Chick' attracted to Cape Bank

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – After nearly 27 years in the industry of business and marketing, in July, Charles "Chick" Pinto accepted the position of Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer of the Cape Bank chain in South Jersey.

He said Cape Bank attracted him because of how close it was to its community and customers, considering they are only located in Cape May and Atlantic Counties.

Pinto said this is what he has always admired about smaller bank chains, as opposed to the larger national banks. He said people appreciate the customer service more at a

small bank because it tends to be more helpful and accommodating.

"A small bank is a little more nimble and understand-



Charles "Chick" Pinto

ing of what goes on in its community, like the local market conditions," he said. "There's a little more closeness to customers."

Pinto has lived in Gloucester County for the past 20 years with his wife and three daughters, who all have a close connection with South Jersey. Before coming to Cape Bank, Pinto was the Senior Vice President and Director of Corporate Communications for Wilmington Trust, another small bank chain in Delaware. He said he has always been fond of smaller banks because they are generally more agile than larger corporate banks.

He said he was with Fleet Bank for eight years, which had branches in Atlantic, Cape May and Ocean Counties. The national M&T Bank corporation eventually acquired the chain. He stayed with the bank for a few more years working mainly in Hammonton and Northfield,

but eventually wanted something different and went to Wilmington Trust. Pinto also worked a four-year stint at Bank of America.

His first management positions in the banking industry included serving in a variety of sales, marketing and business lines for PSFS in Philadelphia and Mellon Bank in Pittsburgh.

After nearly three decades in the industry, Pinto said banking has evolved immensely, especially with the amount of mergers that have occurred and the immense economic changes. Working at both small bank chains and big corporate chains, he has noticed many differences between the two.

He said even though he is partial to smaller banking facilities; choosing a banking facility all depends on what one is looking for. Pinto said a corporation or big business is certainly better off using a larger bank, as well as those who travel often.

"Big banks offer more convenience for travelers because of a larger branch network and usually a broader array of banking services," he said. "It's the right choice for some people but on the flip side, if you don't need those services, you can go with a smaller bank."

He said a major problem for banks is people have trouble with them after the nation's bailout and market issues. He said that has caused a major problem in the industry and leaves people uncertain about where to go for banking or loan services.

"We're all feeling the condition of the present economy," he said. "There is less demand for loans even though interest rates are at an all time low. People and businesses are being more cautious than ever."

He said he feels a smaller bank chain like Cape Bank is truly there for its customers in the South Jersey area. He said there are a lot of good community banks around the nation and especially in this region.

He said the three major aspects of a smaller bank that make it more appealing than a large corporate bank are the local market understanding, the responsiveness and the relations they have with customers.

"Smaller banks must care more – it's what makes us more appealing and what we offer that tends to be better," Pinto said. "It's how most differentiate us from larger banks."

He said a small bank commonly has lower overhead as well, giving it more control over its expenses, fees and interest rates for customers. Pinto said larger banks also tend to have more regulations. When it comes down to it, Pinto believes choosing a bank is all about deciding what a person really wants in regards to financial and banking services.

"That's what a free market system is all about," he said. "Having the options to choose what you need most."



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