



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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BOX CITY RAISES FUNDS FOR AREA HOMELESS

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Cape May approves outdoor seating rules

Nixes per-seat fee, instead will impose \$25 surcharge on all mercantile licenses

'I think what we've done here is improved it, made it equal and provided people with an opportunity to step up and to be part of the solution for the parking.' – Councilwoman Patricia Hendricks



By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council passed an ordinance to regulate temporary outdoor seating at bars, restaurants and hotels that spreads the burden of inadequate parking in Cape May to all business owners.

The ordinance did not contain annual fees for restaurant and hotel owners that ranged from \$150 to \$300 per seat found in an earlier draft. Instead, a \$25 surcharge will be placed on each

mercantile license issued by the city for all businesses to bolster a parking trust fund. The surcharge will not be implemented until 2018.

During a City Council meeting May 2, Shirley Phinney, owner of Elaine's Dinner Theatre, called the ordinance a good compromise.

Former councilman Bill Murray asked if it was fair to charge a fee to businesses such as house cleaning services and 38 other categories of mercantile license holders. Mayor Chuck Lear said

the plan was to spread the parking burden to all businesses that affect traffic in the city.

Jules Rauch, a member of the Outdoor Seating Committee, said most restaurants in the city have been increasing the number of their seats without approval. He said it was determined in 2016 there were about 1,000 seats in excess of those noted on mercantile licenses.

No additional parking has been planned or provided, Rauch said. He called the new ordinance a "free ride" for restaurants.

Rauch noted City Solicitor Frank Corrado said the \$25 surcharge could generate almost as much as per-seat annual fees. Rauch said he calculated a total collection of about \$35,000 per year as opposed to \$110,000 to \$150,000 with a per-seat fee.

"There may be enough money in the parking trust in 15 years to purchase a small lot," he said.

Councilwoman Patricia Hendricks said the "flaws" that Rauch included in his litany of missing

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Cape May taps Young as new city manager

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Neil Young was appointed as the new city manager of Cape May at a City Council meeting May 2. He has been serving as interim city manager since January, following the December 2016 retirement of Bruce MacLeod.

In January, Mayor Chuck Lear and City Council appointed a City Manager Search Committee that established the credentials they would seek to fill the position. The committee set about recruiting candidates, reviewing applications and interviewing people who matched the preferred credentials.

The members considered the applications of 40 candidates before narrowing the field and inviting candidates for interviews. From the pool of finalists, the search committee made recommendations to Lear and council, and six applicants were brought in for interviews.

Lear noted the city was fortunate to have a strong candidate pool from which to choose its finalists. He thanked the search committee for its diligent work.

"We interviewed several impressive and well-qualified candidates and Neil was always among them," he said. "His municipal services background, his successful career as

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Cape May's new administration inclined to support wheelchair ramp at post office.
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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

U.S. Coast Guard to the rescue

A helicopter search and rescue demonstration was held Saturday, May 6, on Cape May Harbor as part of the Cape May County Coast Guard Festival. The event, at Coast Guard Training Center Cape May, included ship, base and harbor tours, live entertainment, children's activities and cultural and historical exhibits. See **more photos on A8**.

Guidelines vs. standards for historic body up for debate

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council voted against introducing an ordinance that would have tightened regulations from the city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on solar panels, wind turbines and satellite dishes, clarified HPC's guidelines as standards and lessened the possibility of appeals of HPC decisions by the Zoning Board.

During a meeting May 2, the ordinance failed in a 3-2 vote with council members Bea Pesagno and Roger Furlin casting the dissenting "yes" votes. Furlin said references to installing wood windows discussed at an earlier meeting were removed from the proposed ordinance.

"Prior to 2003, architectural considerations were written into city codes as guidelines," he said. "In 2003, the city adopted and published design standards mirroring Department of Interior design standards in an effort to clarify design criteria for applicants coming before the HPC."

He said the ordinance corrected city codes that reference published design standards as guidelines rather than standards. Applicants can appeal HPC decisions they are unhappy with to the city's Zoning Board.

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Private property blocking plan for new beach paths

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Councilman Tom Conrad said he has received a number of comments on new beach access paths along the bay but with a new twist. The latest comments are complaints from residents that there is no path in their neighborhood.

"Almost all love them and are thanking the township for doing them, especially here in Villas," he said. "We're hearing stories about how it is now easier to get to the beach with a family, feeling safer and what a wonderful job the township workers did."

He said he has received a new type of complaint on the beach access paths "Why didn't the township do my street or any other streets near mine?" Conrad said he has heard. "The reason we didn't do them all is that we didn't own those street ends."

The township created new beach accesses at well-used, township-owned paths. However, a number of paths on are on a public access right of way through private property, he said.

"Plus we had to see how they worked and what the public thought of them," Conrad said. "Now we know, we can go from there."

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE
The beach paths being created in Lower Township are so popular that plans are in the works for more. However, some are being blocked by private property and other issues.

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