

# Board OKs addition to West Cape eatery; others needed

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — The borough's Planning-Zoning Board gave conditional approval for Sapore Italiano restaurant to build an addition, creating space for 14 new seats, subject to approval of the borough's Historic Preservation Commission and the National Register of Historic Places.

The building, at 416 S. Broadway, was originally known as the Whilldin-Miller house and portions may have been constructed as far back as 1711, which would make it the oldest home on Cape Island. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2003, according to the National Park Service.

During a meeting Feb. 13, attorney Sal Perillo said Sapore Italiano is the fourth restaurant to occupy the building and is doing very well. In addition to adding more seats, the addition would correct a step down from one dining

room to another that has created "an uncomfortable situation," he said.

An existing 7-foot ceiling would be raised to 8 feet, Perillo said.

Project architect Joe Courter said the addition would be located off an existing enclosed porch and would measure 8 feet by 34.5 feet. He said a safer fire exit would also be created.

"What we tried to do is blend this in the existing architecture as well as we can," Courter said.

Project planner Tiffany Morrissey said the addition would be constructed on the Congress Street side of the restaurant. The board approved a variance for side-yard setback. Morrissey said the current setback to Congress Street was about 15 feet to the corner of the property.

"The house is on an angle so it is not directly parallel to Congress Street, so you have about 15 feet at the western-most corner and 17.4 feet at the eastern-most corner," she said.

"With the proposed addition, it will not extend the full length of the building, it only goes 34 and a half feet, you have another 28 feet, including the patio, of building area that will conform to the setback requirement."

Morrissey said at the closest point, the addition would be 7 feet from the property line of Congress Street. She said an additional 14 feet exists before reaching the curbing, effectively creating a 21-foot setback between the building and the curb.

The board also approved a variance to increase impervious ground coverage. Morrissey said an ordinance allows impervious coverage of 60 percent in the C-1 zone and the existing building has coverage of 68 percent. The addition would increase impervious coverage to 69 percent, Morrissey said.

She said the restaurant is located in a block that is a split between the C-1 zone and a C-3 zone to the north that permits 80

percent impervious coverage. The application also received a variance from the requirement for 35 percent open space. The restaurant would have 30 percent vegetative cover of the property, Morrissey said.

Variations were approved for existing, nonconforming conditions including parking in the front yard and a free-standing sign. Morrissey noted the building has street frontage on Broadway, Congress Street and Fow Avenue, unlike a typical corner lot.

The borough's parking ordinance requires one parking space for every six seats. She said the restaurant, with the new addition bringing the total of seats to 163, would be required to provide 27 parking spaces. Morrissey said 22 existing on-site parking spaces would be provided.

She said the addition could not be placed on the other side of the restaurant because that is the location of the kitchen.

Board engineer Ray

Roberts said the application requires input from the borough's Historic Preservation Commission for the architectural treatment. He said the site has plenty of room for an underground recharge system for rainwater to address increased runoff from the addition, which should be a requirement for approval.

During public comment, resident Alan Mitchell said the property is currently deficient in parking spaces in a "very parking space-deficient area." He said he has begun a survey of businesses and available parking in the Wilbraham Park area.

"The deficiency is striking," Mitchell said.

Former mayor Pam Kaitern said provisions exist in a borough ordinance that allow funds to be collected to create additional parking areas when there is a parking space deficit.

Board member Lisa Roselli asked if the applicant would be willing to contribute to a parking

fund. Perillo said he did not believe the borough has an ordinance requiring such a contribution. Roselli said another applicant expanding their restaurant was asked to make a contribution to the borough Environmental Commission's ongoing program to increase use of bicycles.

Roberts said the borough's zoning ordinance addresses a parking fund. He said the ordinance states an alternative to on-site parking may include a contribution to a parking fund.

For the first five spaces, \$5,000 per space is to be paid over a five-year period, Roberts said. He noted there was an existing nonconformity in the number of available parking spaces. Perillo proposed reducing the number of new seats to 12, which would decrease the deficiency to two spaces. He said the owner would make a \$10,000 contribution to a parking fund over a five-year period.

# West Cape May explores plan to lower resident electric bills

By RACHEL SHUBIN  
Special to the Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — The Board of Commissioners heard a presentation from Commercial Utility Consultants on Feb. 14 regarding a state-supported program that aims to save residents money on their electricity bills.

The initiative offers lower electric rates for residents. The borough had considered the option offered by the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) in

years past but ultimately decided against the program.

Stacia Scaduto, a consultant for Commercial Utility Consultants, explained that this program is taken from the control of the state and is mimicked on a local level. A statute stipulates that there are no cancellation fees or penalties if residents choose to opt out of the program.

"BPU offers a competition for third-party suppliers in bulk," Scaduto said. "It ultimately offers

consumer protections in place, while lowering the rate on the electric bill."

He said if the borough went ahead, the company would put West Cape May in a cooperative with other local towns participating in the program.

"Nothing changes for the residents; we still provide everything that Atlantic City Electric (ACE) provides," Scaduto said. "The only change is one line on the bill with the supplier's name and rate."

Mayor Carol Sabo asked Scaduto how his organization would make a difference for residents.

"We differentiate ourselves by coming into your town and managing the program for you," Scaduto said. "By statute, the rate we offer has to be lower than ACE. If ACE lowers

their rate, we could potentially be paying more. What we wrote in our policy is that we would go back to our supplier and have them lower the rate to meet ACE, or we opt out."

Commissioners expressed concerns about the cooperative grouping aspect of this program.

"I don't know if overall this is the best thing because of areas with smaller populations versus a big city," Deputy Mayor Peter Burke said. "Also I'm concerned with the issue of the local grouping."

The program would not apply to customers with solar panels. Sabo asked Scaduto why residents with solar panels would not be able to benefit from the program.

"The net meter for residents with solar panels

tells the utility how much solar energy is used in a home and how much from a grid," Scaduto said. "Residents with credit for producing excess energy were losing their credits."

If the borough joins the program, it could receive points toward Sustainable New Jersey.

In other business, the borough discussed new cyber liability insurance and training required by the Atlantic County Municipal Joint Insurance Fund (JIF).

"We will have \$7,500 worth of coverage as our deductible for all members covered for our cyber insurance," said Lauren Vitelli, borough finance assistant. "We had a cyber assessment done last year and we are a moderate risk, because we had a few things that were a minimal risk."

She said the commissioners and specific borough employees need an hourly training every year on security. The borough will need to create a cyber security response plan.

Reconstruction of the borough parking lot and lighting was also discussed.

"I met with Greg Basile from Public Works and we walked the site," borough engineer Ray Roberts said. "Our task is to come up with a proposal for redoing the parking areas in

sections depending on our budget."

There are six sections of the municipal lot that need work, including the police access lane to Broadway.

"The condition you see when you look at the driveways and parking lots is the typical deterioration of the subbase," Roberts said. "This surface is from the original lot in the early '70s. We have heavy vehicles, police traffic and public works driving on it. It's not a parking lot, it's public thoroughfare."

Roberts said the lighting is also estimated to be from the mid-'70s.

"Standards were different then," Burke said. "We should use LED lighting and nothing higher than a 12-foot pole. The poles can be closer together and more of them will be better than the big spotlight we have now."

There is no storm drainage system in the municipal complex, only a catch basin, according to Roberts.

"Our recommendation is to upgrade these areas so there is an underground recharge system that would be a basin, like we have done on Sixth Avenue," Roberts said. "It can be graded so that the water will rush to the basins and be dispersed underground. It's a better way of keeping the life-cycle of the project."

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| 25   | 3:22  | 3:58  | 9:45  | 9:44  |
| 26   | 4:29  | 5:04  | 10:48 | 10:48 |
| 27   | 5:30  | 6:02  | 11:45 | 11:47 |
| 28   | 6:25  | 6:55  |       | 12:37 |

MOON PHASES

First quarter, Feb. 23 • full moon, March 2

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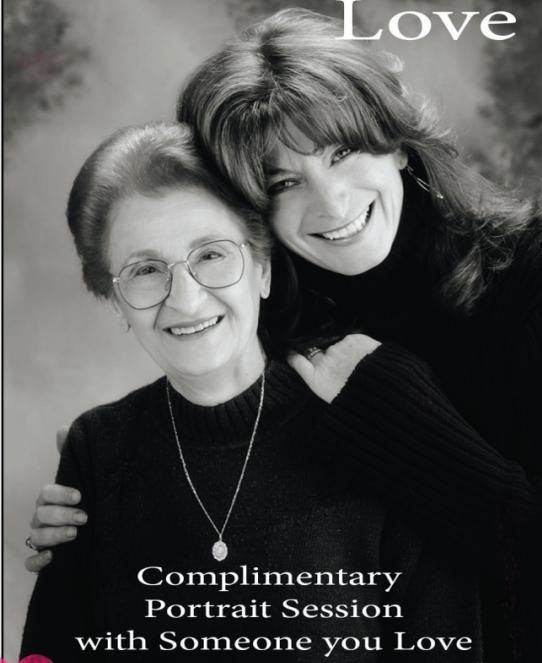
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