

Lower MUA looks at yearly progress, projects for 2018

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

VILLAS — The Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority held its annual reorganization meeting Feb. 9 and reappointed most of the Board of Commissioners to their same positions. Marc Lambert joined the commission as a new board member. "I have lived in Lower Township my whole life and own several businesses in the area," Lambert said. "I have raised five kids here and I am happy to be here, learn what you do and help in any way that I can."

MUA Director Michael Chapman and solicitor William Kaufmann met to review the communications the MUA received from the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). They went over proposals received for

all the service contracts. "We go through the proposals and compare what was submitted to what was required to be submitted," Kaufmann said. "We deliver a report on those proposals and their compliance with the specifications. There were a couple things with the insurance broker that we had to take care of. We've done a couple little twisted things with the engineering contracts, because you have more than one engineer working on one capital improvements project. We came up with a method for that."

Engineer Marc DiBlasio thanked the board for the opportunity to continue working with the MUA.

"The board awarded three projects for the capital water improvement plans, and these are the priority projects

for this year," DiBlasio said. "We will get a schedule in place to move forward on the East Villas Phase II project. We hope to have construction start in June and continue through the summer."

The March board meeting will have a public hearing to discuss in depth the East Villas Phase II project.

Chapman thanked the MUA staff for their hard work and effort in preparing for the reorganization meeting.

"We have really good stuff going on this year, with our three projects for waste water treatment," Chapman said. "They are all significant projects in their own right."

The capital water improvement plans include structural evaluations and maintenance for the water towers.

"The areas have been neglected for a few years," Chapman said. "We will repair the hatches, ladders and caulking to take care of rough

spots." The water main installation on Route 109 will be completed this year.

"Last year we put in casing and we had to go to the New Jersey Turnpike Authority to get approval to push through," Chapman said. "Another key project is having a feasibility study done for sewer over in Shawcrest, where we have been taking videos of the mess over there."

The potential sewer expansion requires a public hearing if a resident objects a pipe being put in the ground.

"They are evaluating expanding the sewer using three different methods," Chapman said. "Each construction method will be done in phases and the options will be presented along with the estimated construction cost and 25 year costs."

According to Chapman, the steps following the completed

feasibility study is figuring out financing options, including how much money can be borrowed and whether rates will be raised.

"It doesn't mean we are going to do it but we are looking into the option," he said. Board Chairman Brian O'Connor read his yearly report.

"I'd like to thank the board and Mike, you have done an outstanding job and all of our wonderful employees and the customer service has been fantastic," O'Connor said. "I'd also like to thank Lower Township Council and public works for their cooperation and support. We are understaffed but we have a bond with (Lower Township) public works that will hopefully last for many years to come."

O'Connor listed the accomplishments of the MUA which include the waste water treatment and capital improvement plans, the water storage

10-year capital study and valve discovery study.

"We have completed the East Villas Phase I water expansion, at Roseann Avenue we replaced a water main, valves and installed fire hydrants," O'Connor said. "A big accomplishment is that we refurbished and replaced three wastewater pump stations and performed the majority of the work with our own staff and two subcontractors to save tax payers money."

In addition to the plans for 2018 stated by Chapman, O'Connor reported that the plans also included replacing the roofs on various water treatment processing places, upgrading the electric services in wastewater treatment plants, Shawcrest Phase I and repairs, repainting and general maintenance upgrades of the Shunpike water tower, with interior and exterior cleanings.

TIDES : Feb. 14-21, 2018

| DATE | HIGH | | LOW | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| | A.M. | P.M. | A.M. | P.M. |
| 14 | 7:03 | 7:24 | 12:27 | 1:12 |
| 15 | 7:41 | 8:01 | 1:06 | 1:47 |
| 16 | 8:17 | 8:36 | 1:44 | 2:21 |
| 17 | 8:52 | 9:11 | 2:21 | 2:55 |
| 18 | 9:26 | 9:46 | 3:00 | 3:29 |
| 19 | 10:02 | 10:25 | 3:40 | 4:06 |
| 20 | 10:42 | 11:08 | 4:25 | 4:46 |
| 21 | 11:28 | 11:59 | 5:16 | 5:32 |

MOON PHASES

New moon, Feb. 15 • first quarter, Feb. 23

Lower honors officers who saved dog in lake

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council presented certificates of recognition to Lower Township police officers Jordan Saini, William Kocis and Jason Felsing for their quick response in rescuing a yellow retriever that had fallen through ice Jan. 21 into Davies Lake at

Higbee Beach.

"Your selfless act exemplifies your dedication and service to our community," Mayor Erik Simonsen said during a council meeting Feb. 5.

According to a news release, the dog had fallen through the ice about 30 feet from the bank of the lake, was unable to get out of the water and was struggling to stay afloat.

Saini made his way onto the ice and out to the dog. When he attempted to pull the dog onto the ice, the ice gave way beneath them. Saini and the dog fell into the frigid lake. Saini was able to swim over to the ice shelf with the dog and get out of the water. He then pulled the dog out of the water and onto the ice. Saini and the dog were able to walk on the ice and back



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Lower Township Mayor Erik Simonsen reads a proclamation honoring officers Jordan Saini, William Kocis and Jason Felsing for saving a dog from a frozen Davies Lake.

onto the bank of the lake unharmed.

Saini was assisted by Kocis and Felsing.

Combined

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Gaffney said.

He said the fire department is in desperate need of renovation, improvements or reconstruction. Gaffney said fixing up the existing fire station would be more expensive than building a new facility, according to an

architect's report.

Gaffney said he thinks a voter referendum on the issue would not be necessary. He said the committee toured the police facility and found it in desperate need of replacement.

Mayor Chuck Lear suggested a bond ordinance be passed to cover survey costs and miscellaneous expenses of the project.

Committee member Barney Dougherty said city auditor Leon Costello stated an existing \$7 million bond ordinance would be paid off this year, which would allow

bonding of ample money for the needs of the fire department without impact on taxes.

Police Chief Tony Marino said a recent rainstorm sent water into his office. He asked when council speaks of moving forward, did it mean for both buildings or just a fire station.

Lear said he believed a building housing both should be constructed.

"That's how I'm leaning," he said.

Marino said multiple rooms could be used by the fire and police departments.

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