

Inspectors find workers at 649 Broad despite closure

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - Cape May construction officer Bill Callahan confirmed state fire officials returned to 649 Broad Street, yesterday, and found evidence foreign student workers were living there despite an order saying no one should enter the house.

According to Callahan, he and state fire inspectors visited 649 Broad Street on July 9 at around 2 p.m., and

observed young people running from the property. Callahan said a number of individuals went next door to 651 Broad, which is also owned by Waclaw and Margaret Berczynski. Callahan said neither 649 nor 651 Broad Street have certificates of occupancy (CO).

"When I got there they scattered like rabbits," Callahan said.

Callahan then called for police support and the inspectors walked through 649 Broad. He said there was evidence people were living in

the home ordered closed by Division of Fire Safety inspectors on June 25, including food in the refrigerator. Callahan said young people could also be seen lingering around the area as if waiting for a chance to return.

"When we tell them to go, they go," Callahan said. "You can't blame the kids, but we don't want the kids to get burned up."

Orange stickers were posted on the premises indicating both properties were in violation of city code.

"I wrote violations today for

occupancy without a CO," Callahan said.

He said the owners are facing fines of \$2,000 per week for each property until the buildings are brought up to code. But Callahan said Mr. Berczynski has still not applied for permits to do some of the work required to abate 61 fire violations cited on June 25. Berczynski requested a reinspection about a week later, but fire inspectors would not clear the house to open. Callahan said Berczynski visited his office yesterday morning and

he explained what needed to be done before he could rent 649 Broad Street again. He said he believed Berczynski understood the situation, and they shook hands. Callahan said Berczynski indicated he planned to file an appeal with the state on the fire code violations.

However, as of yesterday, the house received a second order to close, this time by the city of Cape May.

Callahan said he is assessing the highest fine possible, and he has been in contact with the Municipal Court


judge. According to Callahan, Municipal Court Judge Peter Tourison told him he could take no action at this time, as Berczynski had the right to appear in court and present a defense.

"So I can't go nail the door shut. But if I go back and there is a problem I will sign the complaint," Callahan said.


Callahan said he is taking a hard line with Berczynski and said he believes he has the backing of interim city manager Bruce MacLeod and Mayor Ed Mahaney.



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Bond

Continued from page A1

would effectively be the same as Ordinance 152-2008, but council would simultaneously pass a resolution to seek waiver from the Local Finance Board to waive required down payment. A \$10 million project would require a \$500,000 down payment. He said a second resolution would be introduced to place the binding question of the \$10.5 million bond ordinance on the Nov. 4 ballot with the intention of avoiding a special election. MacLeod said the move would save the city

\$30,000, but would still give the voters a final say on the bond ordinance.

MacLeod said the plan is to have town meetings between July 21 and the Nov. 4 election to provide information and allow for public input. In other council business, MacLeod said city council has shown a willingness to move toward televising council meetings. At the same time, he said, there was discussion of updating the city's web site - a move that could improve coverage of local

issues. He said the city would continue investigate taping meetings for broadcast at a later date.

The city is also entering into a renegotiation of its interlocal services agreement for police services with West Cape May and Cape May Point, and negotiations for establishing an interlocal agreement for Municipal Court services. MacLeod said both boroughs have expressed an interest in continuing the agreement on police services, and for com-

binning court services.

Council authorized the mayor, city manager and police to begin negotiations on police services, and for the mayor and city manager to start the process on the courts.

Cape May Point currently utilizes the West Cape May Municipal Court. A new could provide court for all three communities at one location, presumably West Cape May Borough Hall.

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Continued from page A1

regard in the field of community development and (is) personally responsible for bringing millions of dollars of

Neighborhood Preservation Program, Neighborhood Housing Rehabilitation Program, HOME-Neighborhood Preservation,

and the Small Cities-CDBG program to the township that benefit low income residents - an impressive feat considering that Lower Township

does not receive applications points for having COAH certification or being an urban aid or distressed community."

Crippen said the NPP program requires there be a NPP coordinator, which is one of the functions she provides. According to Crippen, who earns \$53,000 per year, she has brought the township \$6,225,000 over the past five years, and has acquired \$717,000 in 2008 with another \$600,000 in applications to write. She said some of her salary could be counted as matching funds for some of the grants the township receives, and that means the township doesn't have to look elsewhere for matching funds.

As far as suggestions that she is not doing enough as a grants coordinator, Crippen said her job performance is well documented.

Fire

Continued from page A1

He said the construction office closed the house for unsafe conditions and the owner found housing for the residents. Inderwies said a number of the 15 people, including children, were staying with friends temporarily, but the structure was apparently being operated as an apartment house. He said the owners mercantile license had expired on April 30. The mercantile license had been issued for two single-family units.

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It has been a wonderful experience to serve the Cape May Point we all love.
Malcolm Fraser

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