



Jennifer Kopp/Cape May Star and Wave

Say cheese – and wine!

The Garden State Wine Growers Association sponsored the Cape May Wine Festival last weekend at the Cape May-Lewes Ferry Terminal where festival-goers took advantage of the warm autumnal weather sampling the award-winning wines from New Jersey, listening to live music, strolling through crafters and the occasional photo opportunity.

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suitable for two or three businesses, fitted out by the tenants at their expense. The front upper level area would house administrative offices and three to five meeting rooms, depending on how they are divided.

Addressing the cost of the building, Kimmel said there are a number of fixed costs associated with the project. The cost of demolishing the existing Convention Hall and moving the Solarium is \$150,000. The hard construction costs, including a 6-percent contingency amount, came to \$9,551,130.

Kimmel said the new Convention Hall would be built to a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) "silver" standard, but without seeking the actual certification, which would add to the cost of the

project. The city budgeted \$500,000 for Solar/Photovoltaic panels, with an offset of \$400,000 through a Purchase Power Agreement (PPA), for a net cost of \$100,000. The cost is for a 31.5 kW system.

The city also budgeted \$60,000 for five vertical wind turbines that Kimmel said should supply about 2-percent of the building's electrical need.

City council has opted to go with a hard surfaced deck outside the building and an acoustic partition that would divide the main hall so two functions could be held at the same time. Both items were expected to be difficult to add at a later date.

Other choices include Theatrical Performance Lighting with a fixed truss, \$55,000; a basic sound system

with wiring prep work to upgrade the system at a later date, \$75,000; an electronics system that includes closed circuit TV, a security system, wireless Internet, phones and intercom system, and a remote access system, \$50,000; theatrical curtains for the stage area, \$25,000; and seats with a telescoping riser system for \$285,000.

The total options list for Convention Hall comes to \$1 million, or just somewhat more than the \$984,000 Kimmel said the city would have to work with in the \$10.5 million budget.

During the public portion, several members of the public encouraged their fellow citizens to vote for the project on Nov. 4, as did the members of council.

WCM Liquor

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ed answering yes would mean the voter supports the sale of a liquor license to be used by a restaurant.

"Shall the retail sale of all of all kinds of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption pursuant to Chapter One of the Title Intoxicating Liquors of the Revised Statutes (s.33:1-1 et. Seq.), be permitted in this municipality?"

The commissioners explained a yes vote would be for allowing a retail liquor store.

"Shall 100-percent of the funds generated by the sale of any liquor license be used to provide tax relief for borough residents by being deposited into a dedicated fund?"

Discussion at Tuesday night's meeting indicated a yes vote would mean the proceeds of the liquor license sales could not be spent on any particular project, or to buy any particular thing. As a dedicated fund, the \$1.4 million anticipated from the sale of the two licenses would not be applied to a single year's budget. Municipal auditor Leon Costello said the revenue from the sale of the licenses would go into a fund, and the interest plus a portion of the principal would go to reducing the tax burden over a period of years. The exact amount number of years would depend on the sale price. Costello projected a savings of 2-cents on the tax rate each year for a period of

eight to 10 years.

Asked why the borough would not keep the principal and use only the interest to reduce taxes, Costello said depending on how much the licenses sell for, the interest alone might not add up to much. He said \$1 million might yield \$70,000 per year, which amounts to about one-cent on the tax rate.

"To make it worthwhile to the taxpayer you need more than the interest," he said.

Costello questioned the logic of putting \$1.3 million in an account and not using it for its dedicated purpose.

Costello was joined by borough solicitor Frank Corrado and Cape May Police Chief Diane Sorantino.

Corrado spoke briefly on the process, but said the borough has broad powers to regulate the licenses.

"It can do anything it wants within reason," he said.

The commissioners have tentatively determined to offer the consumption license to a new or existing restaurant, and permit the serving of alcohol between 10 a.m. and 10 p.m., Monday through Saturday. Retail sails for the distribution license would be limited to 9 a.m. to 10 p.m., Monday through Saturday and from noon to 10 p.m. on Sunday. The size of the facility would be controlled by local zoning, and the number of barstools in ratio to dining seats is yet to be determined.

Corrado also said the

license has to go to the highest bidder, but the bidder must then qualify for a license through the state office of Alcoholic Beverage Control.

Sorantino, who spoke on the impact of liquor license on law enforcement, said her department is involved in that qualification process, including an extensive background check.

Sorantino said she was asked about drunk driving by a West Cape May resident earlier that day. Sorantino said nothing is guaranteed, but added that presently there are 27 liquor licenses in Cape May and none in West Cape May, but approximately half the arrest for drunk driving made by her department are made in West Cape May.

"Most of them are coming out of Cape May," she said.

Mayor Pam Keithern said liquor is already being served in the borough, just in private homes or for private events.

"Surprise!" she said.

Resident Joan Hodges, a retired psychologist, said there is no correlation between proximity to alcohol and alcoholism.

"People who are going to drink will drink regardless of the distance to the liquor store," she said.

Asked if the liquor licenses would not turn into a liability, Corrado said, "That's true of anything."

Battle

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According to McPheeters, the sign was still there when he left the house to do errands. He thinks he was seen picking up the leaflets and the theft was retribution.

"What scares me is that it was done in broad daylight and they obviously know my car because it wasn't here," he said. "And my neighbor's two signs were still there."

In retrospect, McPheeters remembered hearing noises the evening before around 10:30 p.m.

The Lower Township Police told him there was little chance of finding the culprits but would provide extra surveillance. The police also told him there had been no other reports of leaflets, but a few about stolen Obama signs.

Ironically, after a telephone interview with McPheeters Wednesday (yesterday) morning, he called the Star and Wave right back.

"They did it again," he said. "There aren't as many but this time they read 'Vote Right, Vote White.'"

McPheeters is concerned

the situation may escalate.

"It makes me profoundly sad to say this but I can only conclude that one of my neighbors or someone who regularly drives by my house is a narrow-minded, bigoted redneck," said McPheeters.

"That they felt compelled to produce a series of small signs on a computer and litter them along in front of my house and for several yards past my house) reveals a deep seated and profound hatred of blacks. It worries me that they seem to have me in their sights. I suspect this may be the same person who graffiti's KKK on the bridge."

Lower Township Police Captain Brian Marker told the Star and Wave the leaflets appeared to be printed on regular paper. Marker said the department has been in touch with county prosecutors and are investigating, and following proper protocol.

"We find this alarming and are taking it very seriously," Marker said. "We intend to locate the origin.

Unfortunately, at election time these things happen."

Marker urged anyone with information to contact the Lower Township Police Department at 886-1619, ext. 156.

Cape May's Police Chief Diane Sorantino said there have been two reports of Obama sign vandalism – one in Cape May and another in Cape May Point.

"A witness saw a person driving an SUV with tinted windows spraying the letter 'N' in front of the name Obama, said Sorantino. "But we also had a report of a McCain sign on Kearny Avenue being set on fire."

Though the fire was a small one, it melted the sign and set a small patch of grass on fire, Sorantino said she was a "little nervous" but with any election whether it be national, county or local, "you see these things happen."

But not one to be outdone, when McPheeters' neighbor gave him one of their Obama signs he said, "I put it right back in the same spot."

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