



LT mayor doesn't want teen parties

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – Mayor Mike Beck asked Lower Township Council to consider a local ordinance to curtail underaged drinking at home.

“Ten of the 16 municipalities in Cape May County have this kind of ordinance,” Beck said.

At Monday’s council meeting, Beck said the ordinance he is looking for is similar to one passed in Cape May Point. He said the ordinance would make it illegal for juveniles to consume alcohol in a private residence, with some exceptions.

“This doesn’t infringe on parent’s right or religious ceremonies,” Beck said.

Beck said they are not trying to stop a parent from allowing their 20-year-old child to have a beer at home. He said what he, and what Cape Assist is trying to accomplish, is to discourage teen parties. Beck said because 10 municipalities already have such an ordinance, he doesn’t want Lower Township to be known as the place where juveniles can drink and not face arrest.

“We don’t want to be the island where all these teen parties go because they won’t be cited,” he said.

Beck said under current law, police cannot cite a juvenile for drinking in a private home, but can only cite the provider of the alcohol. He said now the police cannot even call the parents of the children to inform them their child has been drinking.

According to information prepared by Cape Assist, penalties under a proposed private property law would be \$250 for a first offense and \$300 for subsequent offenses. Judges can also postpone eligibility for or suspend driving privileges. However, the proposed law would give judges the discretion to waive penalties for participation in an educational course on youth

Please see Teen, page A2

Temporary tower to be erected for phone service

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – A 100-foot tall steel pole will be placed near the water tower at Madison Avenue for continued cell phone service in the area while the tower is undergoing repairs.

City Manager Bruce MacLeod said the city Planning Board voted to install the temporary cell service tower on the same site as the water tank. The pole will be shorter than the water tower, which is 130-feet tall.

MacLeod said the temporary tower will be installed to replace the three service

antennas normally attached to the water tower. He said there were two antennas on the legs and one attached to the bowl of the tank. When the water tower rehabilitation is completed, the wireless carriers will be responsible for re-attaching their antennas to the legs or the surrounding handrail.

“No providers will be allowed to put antennas on the actual tank,” MacLeod said.

The pole will be supported by a ballast at the base, which will provide enough weight at the bottom to keep it upright.

Please see Tower, page A2



Christopher South and Cain Chamberlin/Cape May Star and Wave

St. Patrick's Day both somber and celebratory

Above, in the St. Patrick's Day Parade in New York City, firefighters carry 343 American flags, one for each firefighter who perished in the Sept. 11, 2001 attack on the World Trade Center. Cardinal Timothy Dolan is seen in the far right of the photo, acknowledging the firefighters. Below, people in Cape May were able to appreciate the sounds of Ireland, such as from Pipe Sgt. Larry Kenney, left, who played at the C-View Inn, Saturday; and The John Byrne Band, which played Irish tunes at the Boiler Room in Congress Hall both Friday and Saturday nights.



Search for owners hinders efforts to clean up neglected properties

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY – The Borough of West Cape May is making progress in addressing the matter of four dilapidated homes, Mayor Pam Kaithern said.

The borough received complaints from neighbors of 308 Atlantic Avenue, 132 and 140 Leaming Avenue and lot 54, block 11 on Sixth Avenue, who consider them eyesores in the community.

Kaithern said the borough does not intend to have the houses demolished, but rather have them repaired and maintained.

However, Public Safety Commissioner Ramsey Geyer said if these houses are let go too long, they can become structurally unsafe and could potentially collapse onto surrounding properties.

“The problem is a lot of these are family homes. The owner dies and someone starts paying the taxes on it without ever seeing the house and we can never find them or contact them,” Geyer said. “It’s a slow process, we just have to keep sending letter after letter and hope for a response.”

Because it had taken so long to contact the owners of 308 Atlantic and the Sixth Avenue



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

Above, two properties the Borough of West Cape May is working on getting cleaned up. Left is 308 Atlantic Avenue, which is little more than a hovel. Right, is a property on Sixth Avenue in the first block off Broadway. The roof is in bad shape and a back yard shed has collapsed.

property, the two cases were sent to the Lower Township Construction Office for possible further action. Roach said he considered these two of the four homes to be the worst of the four. He said they were deemed dilapidated and hazardous.

West Cape May has an inter-local agreement with the Lower Township Construction Office.

Construction Office Director Gary Playford said he has only had around five cases like this sent to the

construction office in his six years with the department, and these are the first in West Cape May. He said the present economy could also be to blame for the lack of maintenance on family and summer homes.

The 308 Atlantic home has been in poor shape for years, with vines and plants literally engulfing the structure. Kaithern said Elizabeth Allison lived in the 308 Atlantic home until she passed away, and it is currently listed as belong-

ing to her relative, Joanne Mandisodzu-Brooks of Springdale, Md. The borough tax assessor’s book says the property is worth \$168,900.

Hattie Carter is listed as the owner of the Sixth Avenue home. Kaithern said Carter passed away as well. Geyer said the Sixth Avenue residence has a roof that is in poor shape, and a small storage shed in the rear of the property that has collapsed.

According to Playford, there is someone in the family interested in purchasing

the Sixth Avenue property and the 308 Atlantic property could possibly go to sheriff’s auction.

The property at 140 Leaming is registered as belonging to James Knight of Secane, Pa., who passed away in 2003. Since the borough wasn’t aware of his passing, numerous letters and notices were returned to the borough. Kaithern recently found the home to be in the name of Crystal Alexander, who was unaware that the home had tax lien on it. Kaithern

informed Alexander of the matter and told her to contact the borough tax assessor office before the house goes into foreclosure.

The final property, 132 Leaming is two doors down and owned by Leonard Christian of Upland, Calif.

Between 132 and 140 is 136 Leaming, a property up for sale through Cape May Realty. Real estate broker Darcy Dickenson said the unmaintained properties on either side have made it a tough sale. Dickenson said something should have been done about the two homes years ago, but action by the borough was slowly taken. She said she contacted the owners on several occasions over the years through letters and by phone, but nothing was done until recently.

Shirley Mae-Moore, who lives at 137 Leaming across the street from the two houses said the lack of maintenance on these properties has been going on for many years. Christian has hired someone to cut the lawn, which she said was an immediate improvement to her view of the property, but other structural issues need to be dealt with. She said she has never been able to contact anyone

Please see Search, page A2



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