



Caper Tigers swim to win despite lack of depth

Page A10



House of the week

B1



169th YEAR NO. 4 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2023 \$1.00

'Stop the Hate' forum to address bias crimes

County Prosecutor's Office to host event Feb. 8 at Middle Township PAC

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — Persons targeted with harassment because of their gender, race, religion, sexuality or nation of origin do not have to tolerate such behavior since they now have an ally in law enforcement.

The Cape May County Prosecutor's Office is presenting the program "Stop the Hate" at 5 p.m. Feb. 8 in Performing Arts Center

at Middle Township High School.

Capt. John Landis of the Prosecutor's Office said the program is designed to educate the community about bias crimes and hate crimes. He said a goal was for the public to understand the difference between bias crimes and bias incidents and how one could lead to the other.

"It's not just important to report a bias crime, when someone does actually commit an offense against you, but also a bias inci-

dent," he said.

Landis said someone using their freedom of speech could call you a derogatory name based upon your gender, your race, your sexuality or your religion and while it's not a crime, it should be reported because it is a bias incident.

From the viewpoint of law enforcement, if you're committing bias incidents, calling people names and talking disparagingly about their nationality, their gender and their choices in life,

eventually that's probably going to lead to a bias incident and a possible violent incident, he said.

"That's where criminal charges would come into play but a lot of times people don't think to report that type of stuff because they don't really know that we use that to kind of build a pattern," Landis said.

When a person eventually acts out, calls you a derogatory name and hits you, which is assault, police will have a record of the

person using the same derogatory name repeatedly, he said.

"It wasn't just a one-time incident, they targeted that person," Landis said.

The county Prosecutor's Office is beginning a safe place initiative which was created by the Seattle Police Department. Any public building or business, such as a store or library, can sign up with the prosecutor's office and

See 'Stop the Hate,' Page A7



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Arch support

Mitchell Iron Works has installed structural supports for decorative arches on the Promenade. The historic replica arches will replace the current utility poles and stadium lights to pay homage to a design from a bygone era.

Lower to consider rent-control measures

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Shawcrest Mobile Home Park residents are asking Lower Township Council to adopt a rent-control ordinance.

On Jan. 18, John Niewinski said he represents the park's tenants.

Niewinski said Middle Township adopted an ordinance to control the increase in rent a landlord can impose. He said residents of the mobile home park received rental agreements for 2023 with an average lot rent increase of 14.1 percent.

The lowest rent increase was 8.3 percent and the highest was 18.6 percent, he said.

"We believe these increases have not been justified and are deemed unconscionable," Niewinski said, noting Legacy Communities purchased the complex in 2020. "Since then we have experienced a 27 percent increase with a 7.1 percent increase in 2022 and an average of 14.1 percent in 2023."

In 2021, anyone who purchased a mobile home after Legacy Communities took ownership saw an immediate increase in their monthly rent of

65.6 percent, he said. In 2023, their rates increased an additional 14.4 percent.

"Anyone who purchased a mobile home in 2022 saw a substantial increase of 55 percent," Niewinski said. "In 2023, these same homeowners saw their increase an additional 8.3 percent."

He said many residents in the mobile home park are seasonal occupants but year-round senior citizens on fixed incomes reside in the park. Niewinski said an 18.6 percent

See Lower, Page A3

Council dissolves city parking panel despite objection

Meier: Refocus committee rather than getting rid of it

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — In a 4-1 vote, City Council dissolved the Municipal Parking Advisory Committee (MPAC) but kept committees overseeing beach safety, taxation/revenue and bicycle/pedestrian safety.

Councilman Shaine Meier requested Jan. 17 that MPAC be restored, noting he valued the efforts of the volunteers on the committee.

"As we know, parking is probably the biggest problem in Cape May as well as traffic," he said.

Meier suggested council specify the focus of MPAC rather than dissolve it. He offered his services as council liaison to committee.

Meier's motion to amend to include MPAC in the list of advisory committees for 2023 failed to receive a second by the other four members of council. He said he would introduce a resolution at council's next meeting to re-establish the MPAC with more direction.

Mayor Zack Mullock said council understood parking was an issue in Cape May.

"We want to make sure that we have the focus where it should be and I

think that's why council wants to take some time to re-evaluate, but I think we can do that through a resolution," he said.

MPAC was recommending changes in valet parking and loading zones on Jackson Street to alleviate blocked traffic in the summer season. The committee was asking all parking, standing and loading activities be limited to the west side of the street. The measures would have eliminated eight parking spaces on Jackson Street.

Jim Testa, an MPAC member, said a letter from all members of the committee to the mayor stated increased parking at the Welcome Center and improvements at the Bank Street parking lot are a result of its recommendations.

The letter noted MPAC's new tasks began in fall 2022 and as a result, it has had only about six months for development of recommendations and there was no year-end review of the committee's work such as had been prior practice with advisory bodies.

"It's a committee that has had one of the longest of the advisory committees' his-

See Parking, Page A4

Stained-glass windows restored, reinstalled at AME Church

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The blackened remains of a fire have been removed and things are looking brighter and more colorful inside Allen AME Church.

J.R. Lamb Co. restored and installed stained-glass windows at the city-owned church.

"It's starting to bring the AME Church together," City Manager Mike Voll said.

He thanked Deputy City Manager Lou Belasco for his attention to the project.

On Jan. 17, City Council approved a \$13,707 change order for installation of wall bracing to pro-

vide support to the exterior walls.

During demolition, the contractor uncovered three areas where the footing and foundations were not installed during original construction and are required to support the walls and floor.

The wall bracing is being installed to minimize exterior wall movement until phase two of the project is completed.

An earlier change order was approved for \$14,045 to install a substrate surface for a new cedar shake roof on the church.

Council awarded a \$441,721 contract to Duall Building Restoration for phase one of the project that included removal of the roofing system and installation of a cedar

shake shingle roof to be included as an alternative option. An asphalt shingle roof was installed on the church in 2021 to stop water leaks.

Belasco said he did not anticipate any further change orders for phase one of the project. The stabilization includes work on the foundation walls and brick piers; replacement of the cellar hatch, windows and doors; removal of the chimney; repair and replacement of clapboard walls; repair or replacement of rafters and joists; installation of new roof; identification and removal of interior elements; removal of invasive vegetation and sidewalk repair.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Newly installed stained glass windows in AME Church.



INTIMATE. ELEGANT.

Take a seat, order your drink and stay a while.
The Lounge menu is back at the Ebbitt Room.

View the menu at EBBITTROOM.COM

Located at the Virginia Hotel | 25 Jackson Street, Cape May | (609) 884-5700

**THE
EBBITT
ROOM**
AT THE VIRGINIA