



Lower residents overflow meeting on flood measures

Page A3



House of the Week

B1



170th YEAR NO. 42 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2024 \$1.00

West Cape May reaps the green from dispensary

Borough collects \$206,000 from Shore House Canna

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — In the past 12 months, the borough has received more than \$206,000 in taxes from its cannabis dispensary, Shore House Canna.

In West Cape May's 2024 municipal budget, \$50,000 represented a penny on the tax rate.

Borough Commission approved its 2024 municipal budget with in April with a half-cent increase in the local purpose tax rate, which increased from 42.6 cents per \$100 of assessed value to 43.1 cents.

Therefore, the revenue generated from the dispensary is equal to 10 percent of the tax rate.

The local purpose tax levy rose from \$2,256,069 to \$2,305,448, an increase of \$49,379, or 2.19 percent.

The budget anticipated \$90,000 in revenue from Shore House Canna in the 2024 budget.

At a Oct. 9 Borough Commission meeting, Nicole Melchiorre, an owner of Shore House Canna, thanked Mayor Carol Sabo, Police Chief Dekon Fashaw, Municipal Clerk Theresa Enteado, borough solicitor Frank Corrado and police Lts. Kris Mazza and Joseph Walker for their support during the

past year.

Shore House Canna held its inaugural Fall Fest on Sept. 28 at the Rea Farm, celebrating its first year in business. The event featured more than 20 vendors of cannabis-related products and live music but no cannabis sales. Melchiorre said more than 800 persons attended the event.

Commissioner Jack Giacomo Antonicello, who oversees public safety, reported there were no problems associated with Fall Fest.

Melchiorre said the dispensary has employed 23 full-time workers and 10 part-time workers during the past year.

She said she was sharing the information because there was a lot of concern when the dispensary opened that there would be "a lot of mishaps" and drug deals taking place in the parking lot.

"We haven't had any of that," she said. "We've actually completed over 113,000 transactions. We've welcomed in over 150,000 customers into the store and, of those folks who have come in, our biggest age group is 50 plus; they're coming in looking for sleep aids and pain relief."

See West Cape, Page A7

City board prioritizes Safe Streets initiatives

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Local elected officials want safer roads for bicycle riders and pedestrians but grant money is not unlimited and projects must be prioritized.

The final meeting of a steering committee for a Cape Island Safe Streets and Roads Program Action Plan took place Oct. 9 at City Hall. The core of the group is Cape May's Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee which was joined by members of the governing bodies of Cape May Point and West Cape May.

Last year, City Council awarded a contract to the engineering firm of Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. (GPI) to begin a traffic study and safe streets action plan for Cape Island to be paid for by a \$200,000 grant.

Dave Kuhn, a project manager with GPI, presented comments from the committee members on the study. One suggestion was the best solution for getting bicycles and foot traffic

off Broadway is to build a bicycle-pedestrian bridge over the wetlands to connect Grant Avenue to First Avenue in Cape May, he said.

"We're hesitant to be specific about a scope of a project at this point, this is a plan, it's to identify locations and some potential countermeasures but not to really scope out the specifics of a project," Kuhn said.

He said there would be a follow up as part of the plan to do a bicycle-pedestrian access study to look at access to the beach and downtown from West Cape May including a potential bridge over the wetlands.

West Cape May Deputy Mayor George Dick asked if GPI wanted to conduct another complete study to identify potential routes to the beach from the western part of Cape Island. Kuhn said that was in the plan as a follow up action funded by a supplemental planning grant which would reassess an earlier study.

Dick said he thought that was what the committee

See Safe Streets, Page A2



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Cape May Mayor Zachary Mullock during the Candidates Night event Oct. 10 at Cape May City Elementary School.

Candidates Night in Cape May

Four City Council candidates square off; mayor unopposed

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The Taxpayers Association of Cape May gave four candidates for one available City Council seat a forum to express their views and qualifications Oct. 10 at a well-attended event at Cape May City Elementary School.

Mayor Zachary Mullock, who is running uncontested, was given an opportunity to respond to questions from moderator Stacy Sheehan separately from the council candidates.

Stephen Bodnar, Mark DiSanto, Joell Perez and Lori Schwartz were given two minutes at the start of the event to introduce themselves.

Perez said he comes from a U.S. Coast Guard family stationed in Cape May and that he has lived in a number of states as his father was transferred. He said residents

have told him they wished for a better quality of life in Cape May. "Because of that, I've been called to represent the people of Cape May," Perez said.

He said his goal was to work with the mayor and council to put residents first and be a strong voice for the city.

DiSanto said he is a professional sport fishing captain who makes a living on the ocean. He said he was an advocate of using underutilized assets of the city, in particular 5 acres of city-owned land on Delaware Avenue that could be turned into a 225-slip marina.

"I have estimates of \$50 million to \$100 million worth of revenue would come into the city and we'd be able to reduce our taxes," DiSanto said.

He said revenue from the marina may allow free trash collection and free beach tags for local

taxpayers.

Bodnar said his professional background was as a career prosecutor and attorney.

"As a prosecutor, I served the community, I handled complex matters, I tried serious cases. I was certified as a police training instructor," he said.

Being a member of Cape May's Zoning Board and the Municipal Taxation and Revenue Advisory Committee (MTRAC), Bodnar said has given him firsthand knowledge of the organizational structure of Cape May and to matters that were especially important to the city.

He said he was the only council candidate who is serving on a city board or committee.

Lori Schwartz said she had owned and operated the largest worldwide woman-owned logistics

See Candidates Night, Page A6



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