



## Forgotten Warriors Vietnam Museum at county airport

Page A3



## House of the Week

Real Estate Resource



170th YEAR NO. 44 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2024 \$1.00

# Cumberland agency to oversee CMPD construction

## Residents question spending money before DEP agrees to necessary land swap

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council approved a \$210,000 construction management agreement with the Cumberland County Improvement Authority prior to having a shovel in the ground for a new police station on a corner of Lafayette Street Park.

City Manager Paul Dietrich said the CCIA had a construction management agreement with the county for the Franklin Street School restoration.

"They were on site every day

as part of the inspection of the Franklin Street School. They were up in Rio Grande as part of the reconstruction of the social services area and they are working over, I think, at the airport now on some of the county rehab," he said.

Dietrich said the CCIA does a lot of construction management in Cumberland County and expanded its services. Dietrich said the CCIA found it could maintain full-time staff working in Cape May, Atlantic and Cumberland counties.

The CCIA brings an extra ben-

efit when it is involved in the design phase of a project, he said, adding they work with the city's architect and engineers to help prepare a good set of bid specifications and plans.

"When we looked at it, we felt this was a good expenditure of money to make sure that we design this building properly and it's managed properly from a construction phase to have somebody on site every day that can make management decisions," he said.

Dietrich said the CCIA's cost is a set fee based on the prelimi-

nary estimate and is significantly less than what an engineer or architect would charge based on a percentage of the bid price.

During public comment, Stacy Sheehan, a former member of City Council, asked if the city was paying the fee now to the authority despite the fact the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has not approved use of the parcel of land as part of a land swap.

"We don't have the land to build this project but we're going to be paying this guy to do this work," she said.

Mayor Zack Mullock said the city has preliminary approval from the DEP.

City solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said it was a phased fee based on progress, so the first 25% covers the initial mobilization, design development and the construction documents procurement phase.

"It's not \$210,000 out the door, it's 25%. Let's get started and if for some unlikely event it doesn't proceed beyond that, the city's not on the hook for \$210,000,"

See Cumberland, Page A2

# A war of words in battle for CD2 seat

Van Drew, Salerno debate at Stockton

By CRAIG D. SCHENCK  
Cape May Star and Wave

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP — Abortion, inflation, immigration, offshore wind and climate change were among the topics as U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew and challenger Joe Salerno shared the stage Oct. 24 at Stockton University for a debate ahead of the Second Congressional District election Nov. 5.

Van Drew is a two-term Republican from Dennis Township who was elected as a Democrat but switched parties during the first impeachment hearing of former President Donald Trump, pledging his "undying support" in January 2020 to the former president and current candidate.

Democrat Salerno, a Lower Township resident, is a Princeton- and Rutgers-educated engineer, lawyer and entrepreneur who is the son of a World War II POW. This is his first run for office.

Panelists Nicholas Huba, digital editor for The Press of Atlantic City, and Alyssa Maurice, director of research for the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University, posed questions to the candidates.

In his opening remarks, Salerno contrasted today with four years ago.

"Tonight, you'll get to know two very different candidates. And, frankly, we're very different than we were just a few years ago," Salerno said.

He said in 2018, he was running a software business, had children in college and was caring for his ailing father. Four years later, he had sold the business, all four of his children had finished college and he was working on the eulogy of his father, who had spent years serving others through Veterans Affairs.

"In 2018, Van Drew was a Democrat, considered an independent voice for South Jersey. Four years later, he had cut a deal with Washington insiders and traded that independent voice for hits on Fox News and became a lackey for his new political party," Salerno said.

Van Drew followed with his opening, stating a reporter recently asked him to name the biggest issues in the district.

"Is it the open border and every-

See CD2, Page A6



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

## Just passing through

Migrating monarch butterflies are congregating in the front yard of St. Peter's by the Sea Church in Cape May Point, a stopping off spot in their 2,800-mile journey from Canada and the U.S. to their wintering sites in the forests of Mexico.

## North Cape man gets 25 years for child sex assault

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — John T. Gillespie, 37, of North Cape May, was sentenced to 25 years in state prison Oct. 18 by Judge Bernard E. DeLury Jr. for sexual assault of a minor.

The sentence was related to a search warrant executed Feb. 10, 2023, at a Town Bank residence. The search warrant was connected with a county Prosecutor's Office Internet Crimes Against

Children Task Force, Cyberinvestigation.

On Oct. 17, 2023, Gillespie was indicted on aggravated sexual assault, sexual assault, endangering the welfare of a child-possession of child sexual abuse material and endangering the welfare of a child distribution of CSAM.

On July 12, 2024, Gillespie plead guilty to aggravated sexual assault and endangering the wel-

fare of a child.

DeLury sentenced Gillespie to 15 years — of which he must serve the entire sentence under the Jessica Lunsford Act, for the sexual assault charge — and a consecutive term of 10 years for endangering the welfare of a child.

Gillespie is also subject to Megan's Law and parole supervision for life.

# Lower renews club liquor license despite objection

## DEP trying to evict Sunset Beach Sportsmen's Club from facility on its property

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council renewed the liquor license of the Sunset Beach Sportsmen's Club despite an ongoing effort by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to evict the club from a small portion on the former magnesite factory property.

The state signed a charter for the club in 1949. The land on which its clubhouse is located

was given to the club by the owners of the former magnesite factory, Harbison-Walker Refractories, more than 49 years ago. The state purchased the magnesite factory site in 1999 to restore the environmentally damaged land.

The club contends a lease of the land for the clubhouse has been in effect since 1982.

At an Oct. 22 meeting, Township Council held a public hearing on renewal of the club's liquor license. Mayor Frank Sippel read a Sept. 19 letter into the record

from DEP's Division of Fish and Wildlife, which made a request to the state Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) for a review of issuance of the liquor license from Lower Township.

He said since that time, the ABC rescinded the request while awaiting a determination of an eviction appeal before the Superior Court Appellate Division.

Substitute municipal clerk Amy Belasco recited the requirements to receive a township club license that requires being a club

of 60 or more members; operating solely as benevolent, charitable, fraternal, social, religious, recreational, athletic or similar purposes; not for personal gain; and must hold non-profit status.

She said club license holders must be in active operation for at least three continuous years prior to submission of a license application and must be in possession of a clubhouse for at least three continuous years.

See Liquor license, Page A3



## AUTUMN HARVEST FARM-TO-TABLE DINNERS

FRIDAYS & SATURDAYS AT BEACH PLUM FARM

Fall brings a joyous medley to Beach Plum Farm. Corn, squash and pumpkins dot the decor, setting the atmosphere for an evening featuring the freshest of autumn's bounty.

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