



Board rejects outdoor seating at Grand Hotel

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House of the Week

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170th YEAR NO. 41 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2024 \$1.00

New firehouse, new mold problem in Cape May

Contractor who built facility less than a year ago unresponsive to complaints

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city was anxious to replace its aging firehouse due to the instability of the building and rampant mold, but Cape May's new firehouse has also developed a mold problem.

In 2021, City Council approved a \$5.2 million construction contract with Duall Building Restoration. Firefighters, elected officials and residents gathered Nov. 29, 2023

for the ribbon cutting and grand opening of the new firehouse.

At a Oct. 1 meeting, council approved a contract with ServePro for mold remediation at the new facility.

City Manager Paul Dietrich said during the summer, condensate leaks were discovered throughout the building.

"The mechanical subcontractor came in and worked with our architect to try to determine the cause of the problem," he said.

Dietrich said the subcontractor worked to correct the issues at the later stage of summer. He said the city tried to get Duall Building Restoration to follow through to take final remediation and cleanup steps, the city working with the architect and City Solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz.

When Duall failed to respond, the city ordered testing for mold, Dietrich said.

"We said, 'now you've got to fix the problem.' No response, so here

we are having an emergency resolution to correct the response," he said.

The subcontractor did its due diligence and the city was at the point at which it needed to have the mold removed, Dietrich said. The city has not fully paid Duall because it is waiting for closeout documents.

"This is obviously still under their watch and care, and so we'll be charging this," he said. "This will be a negative change order, so

to speak, to the contractor to reimburse the city."

Dietrich said he expected the city would have to replace sheetrock and anything else that cannot be cleaned or remediated. He said the contractor would again be notified, which may cause council to amend its resolution with ServePro.

"We're anticipating that the contractor is not going to follow

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Planting in the dunes

The Cape May Environmental Commission held Dune Day on Oct. 6, planting dune grass in bare spots in the dunes. Above, Gretchen Whitman of the Environmental Commission and volunteers from the National Honor Society at Middle Township Middle School plant dune grass plugs.

Lafayette Park, nature trail now moving forward

City OKs soliciting bids for long-stalled projects

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council authorized placing two projects out to bid — a nature trail behind Cape May City Elementary School and the next phase of Lafayette Street Park, which includes improvements closest to the school, an open play area, dog park, pavilions and bocce ball court.

City Manager Paul Dietrich said at a Oct. 1 meeting that the city has received preliminary approval from the county Open Space Board for funding of about 90% of the cost of the nature trail. He said the \$1.9 million grant still needs to be approved by the county Board of Commissioners.

Mayor Zack Mullock thanked the county for its participation in the project.

Councilman Shaine Meier asked if the next phase of the park project would include a baseball

field. Dietrich said there would not be a dugout or backstop but bases would be marked in an open area.

Mullock said the city is receiving a \$500,000 grant from the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for the park that expires by the end of the year.

Draft plans for the projects are on the city's website under construction projects.

During public comment, former councilwoman Stacy Sheehan asked about a resolution awarding a \$580,145 contract to Charles Marandino LLC for reconstruction of the block of Franklin Street in front of the firehouse and new library.

Dietrich said some of the curbing would be replaced, brick gutters and sidewalks would be installed and the road resurfaced. He said granite or slate curbing would not be disturbed by the

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USCG assisting candidates who aren't quite shipshape

By ZACH SHAPIRO
U.S. Coast Guard

CAPE MAY — The U.S. Coast Guard is pioneering new ways to attract recruits through wellness training.

The Future Sentinel Preparatory Course (FSPC) is designed to help applicants who would otherwise be unable to enlist for physical reasons meet body composition standards before entering boot camp. The second beta test group is under way at Training Center Cape May.

The FSPC focuses on improving physical fitness through a daily routine of light workouts and comprehensive education on nutrition and holistic wellness. To set students up for

success in training and beyond, participants learn healthy eating habits, stress management techniques and effective sleep practices.

"We're committed to setting recruits up for success not just in boot camp, but throughout their careers," said Chief Petty Officer Jonathan LaKose, assistant school chief at TRACEN Cape May. "By tackling body composition challenges early, we help candidates transition smoothly into Coast Guard service."

The course is tailored to each student's needs and can range in length from seven days to 12 weeks. Students graduate from

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Stockton poll: Election distrust persists

Survey finds third of N.J. voters doubt legitimacy of 2020 count

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP — One-third of all New Jersey voters still doubt the legitimacy of the 2020 election for United States president, according to a poll released by the Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University.

As many as 24% of New Jersey voters disagreed strongly and 9% disagreed somewhat that the 2020 election for president was fair and secure. The rate remains steady from a March 2021 Stockton poll which found that 34% of New Jerseyans disagreed, at least to some extent, that the 2020 election was fair.

Election distrust persists in 2024. Nearly one-third

(31%) said they have little (18%) to no confidence (13%) that votes will be accurately cast and counted in November's election.

Majorities agree, at least somewhat, that the 2020 election was fair (63%) and are at least somewhat confident that the result will be accurate this year (68%). There is a clear split in election doubt and distrust along party lines.

"The poll goes to show that years after Jan. 6 and the election turmoil of 2020, election distrust is pretty much baked in among a certain group of voters," Alyssa Maurice, the center's director of Research, said. "Despite the lack of evidence of

widespread fraud, this skepticism is not budging.

The poll of 630 registered voters was released by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy and has a margin of error of +/- 3.9 percentage points.

With distrust looming over the electoral process, more than one-third (36%) of voters say they have little (26%) to no confidence (10%) that there will be a smooth and peaceful transition of leadership after the election when a new president is sworn into office. About 1 in 5 (22%) are very confident in a smooth transition of power, while 36% are at least somewhat confident and 6% are not sure.

Voters' trust in other democratic institutions, like a free press, is also low with less than half (45%) saying they are very (12%) or somewhat (34%) confident that journalists will report news related to the election fairly and accurately. One in five are not too confident and one-third are not at all confident. The Hughes Center recently hosted an event with Peter Baker, chief White House correspondent for The New York Times, on journalistic ethics and challenges in the current media landscape, including declining trust.

A majority (62%) of voters

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