



City to rethink invasive species ordinance

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House of the week

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166th YEAR NO. 50 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2020 \$1.00

No easy solution to W. Cape May's flooding problem

Whole system connected, any changes would cause problems somewhere else

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Increasing construction and limited drainage to the meadows is contributing to flooding in the borough, and residents expressed their concerns about the flooding in the 430 block of Third Avenue during a Borough Commission meeting Dec. 9. Fred Fellmeth said flooding has been extensive over the past four to five weeks.

"It's no longer wetlands, which I love, it is now a lake with some grass stalks coming through it," he said.

Fellmeth said a culvert that runs from the northern side to the southern side of the wetlands under Second Avenue had been clogged but debris was removed.

Third Avenue resident Lucille Romano Hawthorn said her property suffered the most flooding of three properties on the block. A few years ago, ducks were floating in a "lake" inches from the foundation of their deck, she said. Hawthorn questioned if the culvert pipe was large enough to accommodate the water.

Borough engineer Ray Roberts said residents provided a map of the routing of a stream as it works its way toward Cape Island Creek near West Perry Street. He provided Borough Commission with a wetland's delineation map showing the southside of Morrison Avenue is wetlands with water working its way through the backyards of all those properties until it reaches Columbia Avenue.

"The surrounding areas are feeding that wetland," Roberts said. "It's not like a river where you have a high point and then it just goes to the low point."

'It would take a major watershed-management plan to go over this to determine what can be done to solve all these problems. You can't just solve one because it's just going to impact something downstream of it.'

-Borough engineer
Ray Roberts

He said several areas in the wetlands area are deeper than the surrounding area, so some places will hold water longer than others. The wetlands on the south side of Morrison Avenue are affected by tides, Roberts said.

When tides are high, water is forced back into that property and will not allow drainage until the tide goes out, he said. Inspecting the culvert pipe last week, Roberts said he found both ends underwater and the water in the wetlands higher than the top of the pipe.

The pipe is functioning, and it should be inspected for debris when a major storm is expected, he said. Roberts said the size of the pipe could be increased, which would speed up drainage, but more water would appear downstream. Whatever flooding problems are present between Second Avenue and Sunset Boulevard would become worse, he said.

The flooding problem is influenced by a weir in the Lower Cape Meadows and storm drainage from Pacific Avenue and a culvert to the city of Cape May that backs

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Susan Krysiak/CAPE MAY MAC

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Cape May MAC (Museums+Arts+Culture) has made its Christmas Candlelight House Tour a virtual experience via Vimeo On Demand available for viewing Dec. 21. Bedford Inn co-owner Paula Murray shows off the dining room of the inn, circa 1883, decorated for Christmas.

Cape May Christmas Candlelight House Tour goes virtual this year

CAPE MAY — Cape May MAC's 2020 Christmas Candlelight House Tour is available for purchase to experience virtually this year.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions and protocols this year, Cape May MAC (Museums+Arts+Culture) decided these annual holiday tours on three nights in December must be canceled in 2020.

The tours have been a beloved annual tradition for nearly a half-century. MAC launched this tour in 1973 and ever since it has been a highlight of the Christmas season in Cape May, America's only National Historic Landmark City. Thousands of people travel to more than a dozen homes, inns, B&Bs, churches and hotels, stepping across the thresholds to take in interiors beautifully decorated for the holidays. It is one of MAC's largest

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Susan Krysiak/CAPE MAY MAC

Ben Ridings portrays Dr. Emlen Physick in the 47th annual Christmas Candlelight House Tour hosted by Cape May MAC (Music+Arts+Culture). This year the event is virtual only. Copies of a video recording will be available for purchase starting Dec. 21.

Murphy heralds vaccine's arrival

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

TRENTON — New Jersey health care workers began receiving the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine Tuesday, a milestone Gov. Phil Murphy called a "momentous day."

With fewer than 100,000 vaccines arriving in the state this week and the need to vaccinate 70 percent of the state's 4.7 million adult residents to get to herd immunity, Murphy and state Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli said there is a long way to go.

"This is not the end (of the pandemic), but it is a momentous day," Murphy

said Monday during his COVID-19 press conference. "It is a day we have all been waiting for. It is a day of hope and optimism."

The first to get vaccinated are "some of our heroic front-line health care workers," Murphy said. "Our health care workers and long-term care facility residents and staff remains our top priority for initial vaccinations."

Before breaking down numbers of both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines anticipated in New Jersey, the governor issued a caution.

"We are also in for several hard months, especially the next six to eight weeks," Murphy said. "As

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-Gov. Phil Murphy

vaccinations move forward we are going to be facing stiff winds from the second wave."

The state Department of Health was reporting another 4,805 coronavirus cases in New Jersey, bringing the total since the pandemic numbers began being tallied March 4 to

405,448 as of Monday.

The department also reported another 25 deaths attributed to COVID-19 across the state, bringing that toll to 15,907, with another 1,868 probable coronavirus-related deaths.

As of Monday, there were 3,635 coronavirus patients being treated in New Jersey hospitals with 704 in intensive care. It was the first time the intensive care numbers topped 700 since the end of May, Murphy said. There were 491 patients on ventilators.

"These numbers will not magically return to zero as we provide our first vac-

See **Murphy**, Page A10

TRACEN sees hike in COVID-19 cases

CAPE MAY — In a message to the public, Coast Guard Training Center Cape May (TRACEN) commanding officer Capt. Kathy Felger stated the base has seen an increase in the number of positive coronavirus cases in three companies — O-199, P-199 and Q-199 — with surveillance testing continuing. Those companies will remain in quarantine until they clear medical protocols.

"Currently, all COVID-positive recruits are either asymptomatic or only had mild symptoms," Felger stated. "No one has required advanced medical care. By

continuing to analyze the spread of cases, we identified groups of concern and have implemented further COVID safety protocols and increased mitigation measures for staff and recruits."

According to Felger, TRACEN continuously monitors all recruits entering training, specifically using a restriction of movement (ROM) plan to test, identify and isolate recruits who test positive for COVID or are showing signs of illness to limit the potential risk and spread of disease. Through these

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