

Spring sports starting up at LCMRHS

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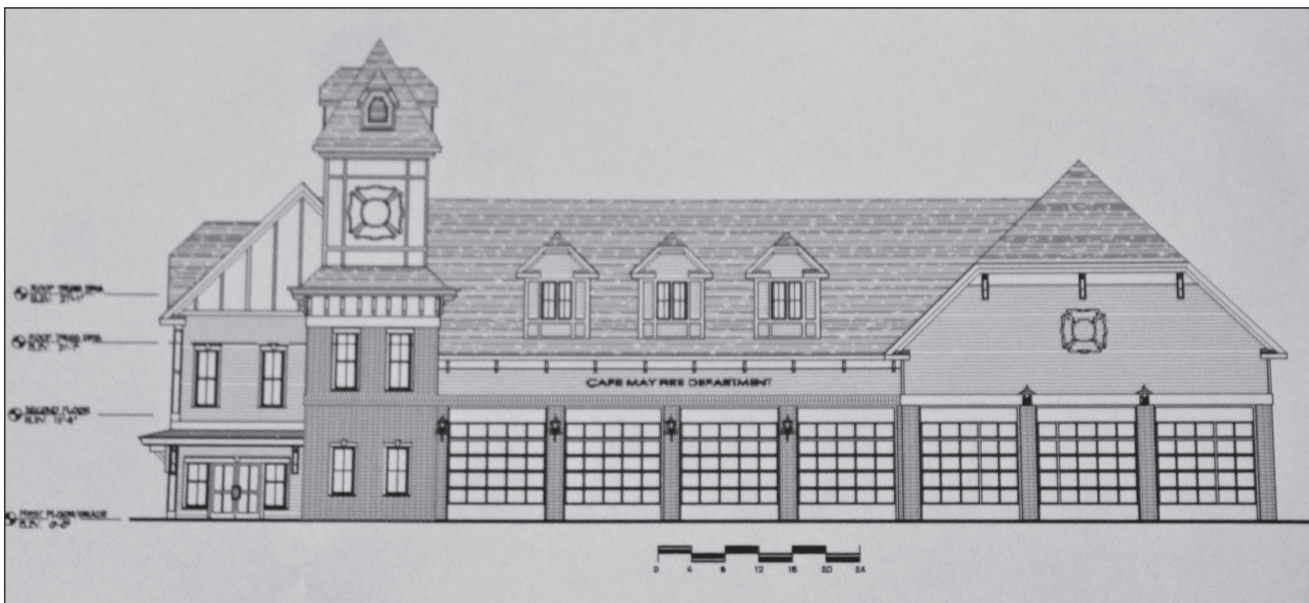


House of the week

Real Estate Resource



167th YEAR NO. 17 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, APRIL 28, 2021 \$1.00



Provided by architect Rob Conley

The images above show the Franklin Street side, top, and Washington Street side of the planned fire station, which will be built on the site of the current firehouse following its demolition. Space will be made available inside the new station for the city firefighters museum.

Fire station plans presented

Historic Preservation Commission unanimously approves design

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Conceptual plans for the city's new fire station show a 16,105-square-foot masonry building with seven bays and a price tag of about \$5.7 million.

Architect Rob Conley presented conceptual designs to City Council on April 20. He said the building would have an estimated construction cost of \$325 per square foot totaling \$5.2 million. Adding in the 10 percent contingency

raises the total building budget to \$5.7 million, Conley said.

Mayor Zack Mullock said a voter referendum passed in favor of constructing a fire station for \$5 million.

Council approved schematic design No. 2 and approved moving forward with the next design phase of the building.

"We as a council very quickly passed a bond ordinance for the fire station based on the voters' mandate," he said. "We then quickly hired Rob Conley

and quickly put together our task force."

Members of the task force included Fire Chief Alex Coulter, former mayor and firefighter Robert Elwell, former fire chief Barney Dougherty, council liaison Lorraine Baldwin, City Manager Mike Voll, Deputy City Manager Lou Belasco, Jim Matthews, Deputy Fire Chief Michael Eck, Lt. William Szemcsak, Historic Preservation Commission Chairman Warren Coupland and city engineer Vince Orlando.

Conley said he has 39

years in fire service including 10 years as chief of Woodbury Heights Fire Department and 34 years' experience as an architect. The new fire station will be located on the site of the current fire hall, he said.

The fire museum was made part of the overall design, Conley said. He said the front of the new building would have a bump-out to provide more interior space with another bump-out in the rear corner of the building

Fire station, Page A5

Public drinking still prohibited on Promenade

City discovered 50-foot limit eliminated all establishments

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council voted against a resolution that earmarked a zone on the Promenade where open consumption of alcohol would be permitted if it were within 50 feet of a licensed premise.

Council realized that in most cases, the establishments are farther than 50 feet from the Promenade.

An earlier resolution temporarily suspended prohibition of public alcohol consumption on the sidewalks and other public spaces in the city within 50 feet of a licensed premises but indicated that in no event would the city permit open public consumption on any portion of Rotary Park, the beach or the Promenade, with the exception of those areas that fell within 50 feet of a licensed premises.

The resolution that failed April 21 stated council recognized that due to practical limitations, only limited areas of the Promenade would fall within 50 feet of a licensed premises. The resolution clarified that open public consumption could take place on the Promenade between Jackson and Decatur streets when purchased from a

licensed establishment or in a BYOB dining situation.

City solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said the resolution was created to avoid arguments over the distance of a licensed premises from the Promenade. He said the area between Jackson and Decatur streets on the Promenade was most likely to fall within 50 feet of an establishment.

"I think the concern was maybe to avoid having people arguing with a tape measure," Gillin-Schwartz said.

Councilman Chris Bezaire said the resolution would have offered clarity for enforcement by the police department.

Deputy Mayor Stacy Sheehan said Carney's restaurant is more than 50 feet from the Promenade. Police Chief Dekon Fashaw said it is close — it's 50 feet to the seawall.

"Other portions of the beachfront are absolutely clear, some are at 100 feet, some are at 75 feet," he said.

Sheehan asked how the resolution would clarify what council approved at its last meeting. Gillin-Schwartz said council approved open consumption of alcohol in an area on the Promenade within 50 feet

See Drinking, Page A4

City begins planning desal plant expansion

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council took the first step to expand the size of Cape May's desalination plant, a project expected to cost in the millions.

During a meeting April 20, council awarded a \$39,241 contract to CME Associates for professional engineering services to provide an implementation plan for expansion of the desalination plant and related water infrastructure improvements.

Mayor Zack Mullock said the contract was the first step toward expanding the plant.

"It's time for the city to make sure that we have not only the best water we possibly can but to provide enough water for the city," he said.

The scope of work includes soil investigations and a determination of permits required by the state Department of Environmental Protection and preparation of conceptual site plans for expanding the water treatment plant.

Costs include \$10,910

working with a grant writer evaluating funding sources, \$3,360 to determine regulatory requirements, \$13,487 for geotechnical services and \$11,484 for a conceptual and integration plan.

The proposal notes a 500-year storm event must be taken into account for a critical facility. A Federal Emergency Management Agency map shows a 100-year tidal event to reach 9 feet which surrounds the desal plant "but apparently does not enter the area where the expansion is proposed."

It notes the finished floor may have to be higher than the current elevation. Freshwater wetlands may exist around the site which contain threatened or endangered species.

A companion resolution applied for a USDA grant for \$29,430. Mullock said engineering services for the desal plant and water infrastructure would be put out to bid, expected to be a multimillion-dollar project.

Councilman Chris Bezaire said additional grant money would be available for the project.

Lower can't prohibit pot smoking on private beaches

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Township Council introduced an ordinance earlier in the month prohibiting the smoking of marijuana in public places, but the measure does not cover privately owned beaches or outdoor smoking areas of restaurants.

During a meeting April 19, Mayor Frank Sippel said a member of the public asked if marijuana smoking would be prohibited on privately owned beaches, at Diamond Beach in particular.

Township solicitor Robert Belasco said the definition of a "public place" included in the ordinance was taken from the state bill legalizing recreational use of marijuana.

"The definition of a public place is any place to which the public has access that is not privately owned, or any place to which the public has access where alcohol consumption is not allowed including but not limited to a public street, road, thoroughfare, sidewalk, bridge, alley, plaza, park, beach, boardwalk, playground, swimming pool, shopping

area, public transportation facility, vehicle use for public transportation, parking lot, public library or any other public building, structure or area," it states.

Belasco said with that definition, given the fact beaches in Diamond Beach, Town Bank and a few in Villas are privately owned, it is up to the owners of those beaches to regulate marijuana smoking.

"Private beaches are not covered by this ordinance," he said. "They have the ability in the bill to enact their own prohibition on the consumption of marijuana

in those privately owned locations."

In this situation, even though the public does have a right under the New Jersey Public Trust Doctrine to access the mean high-water line on a privately owned beach, it is incumbent on those who own private beaches to enact their own regulations, Belasco said.

He said there is a private club in Diamond Beach that allows alcohol consumption to its members. Belasco said they can let people

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