



House of the week

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Leave the car, take a jitney around city

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More high tide flooding events likely in future

NOAA report shows number of days continues to increase

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

A report issued last week by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) reported coastal communities across the nation continued to see high tide flooding last year, forcing residents to deal with flooded shorelines and streets — a trend that is expected to continue this year.

By midcentury, Cape May could experience 55 to 135 high tide flooding events per year.

According to the NOAA, high tide flooding (HTF), often referred to as nuisance or “sunny day” flooding, is increasingly common due to years of relative sea level increases. It no longer takes a strong storm or hurricane to cause flooding in many coastal areas, the report states.

Nationally, five days of high tide flooding occurred within coastal communities, tying the record set in 2015. Flood days broke records in the Northeast, with a median of 10 days, and the Eastern Gulf of Mexico at five days, due to a combination of active nor'easter and hurricane seasons combined with sea level rise.

The NOAA has identified more than 40 locations whose annual rates of HTF are rapidly increasing. Annual rates at 25 other locations are also trending upward but more gradually. These increases suggest a much wetter future for many coastal areas.

“Once communities realize they are susceptible to high tide flooding, they need to begin to address the impacts, which can become chronic rather quickly,” said William Sweet, an oceanographer for the NOAA’s Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services and lead author of the report. “Communities find themselves not knowing what to expect next year and the decades to come, which makes planning

difficult. Our high tide projections can play a vital role in helping them plan mitigation and other remedies.”

Sweet and his co-authors project that in 2019, the national high tide flood frequency is expected to double from the year 2000 across U.S. coastlines, with some regions seeing an even larger increase: the Northeast Atlantic could see a 140 percent increase. El Nino conditions that are predicted to persist through 2019 are a factor that contributes to the increase, along with continued sea level rise.

By 2030, long-term projections show 7 to 15 days of high tide flooding nationally. By 2050, the number rises to 25 to 75 days, according to the NOAA.

There were 12 locations that broke or tied their HTF records during 2018. HTF was most prevalent along the Northeast Atlantic coastline, with 10 median deviation days, and several HTF records were broken within the Chesapeake Bay. Records include 22 days of HTF in Washington, D.C., and 12 days each in Annapolis and Baltimore, Md. At least in the case of Annapolis, the record number of days with HTF caused parking and transportation disruption in the downtown area and negatively affected commerce.

Projected frequency increases in HTF are especially problematic in many of the older, low-lying East Coast cities that were built just above average highest tides. As sea levels have risen over the last century, storm water systems are no longer able to perform as designed. HTF causes tidewater to fill storm water pipes, which prevents rainwater from entering storm drains and worsens effects from flooding.

Many of these gravity-driven systems are ceasing to function as designed,

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USA Architects

The exterior rear view of Option Three shows the parking lot and outside facade of a combined public safety building.

Architect presents exterior models of Cape May public safety building

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — USA Architects presented massing models options for a new public safety building along with shapes relative to the surrounding structures.

At a July 9 meeting of the Public Safety Building Advisory Committee, Andrew Adornato, of USA Architects, said floor plans continue to be refined. He presented three massing models minus any type of building materials.

Public sessions will be held in August to allow the public to comment on possible designs and finishes. Adornato said the building could have brick or vinyl siding or a combination of the two.

The building concepts could be converted to Victorian or Gothic Revival

architecture. Adornato said the public safety building could have a flat or pitched roof.

“We are open to do anything that this committee and the public brings to us but we need to start getting some of this on paper,” he said.

Adornato said on some of the concepts, the third floor is kept to the middle of the building allowing the scale to step up from the street. He said cost estimates would be completed by the end of the month and updated as materials are selected.

Option One keeps the existing fire museum while options two and three demolish the museum and create a display area for the fire department’s antique fire engine as part of the new building. Adornato said Option One did not accommodate some of the future needs of the fire and police

departments. “It does fall short of the additional apparatus and SUV bay on the fire side of this scheme,” he said.

The concept also placed a fire department training tower at the front of the building along Franklin Street that Fire Chief Alex Coulter called an eyesore in that location.

In keeping the museum, the layout of the police side of the building became very linear and spread out, Adornato said. Since the committee’s last meeting, additional storage was added to the design of the third floor.

Committee member Rose Traficante said the massing model for Option One looked very congested.

For Option Two, the entrance to new fire museum section has been located

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Zelenak resigns as Cape May school chief

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The Cape May City Elementary School Board of Education accepted with “deepest regret” the resignation and retirement of Superintendent Victoria Zelenak effective Oct. 1.

At a July 9 meeting, the board appointed Business Administrator John Thomas as acting superintendent effective immediately.

“Whereas the Cape May City

Board of Education must temporarily fill the position of superintendent, due to an extended medical leave and resignation by Victoria Zelenak and whereas the Cape May City Board of Education is desirous of appointing John Thomas as acting superintendent during the extended leave of the superintendent and whereas John Thomas does not hold the standard New Jersey certificate required



ZELENAK

for the position and whereas New Jersey code Title 6A permits the application in writing to the commissioner of education through the executive county superintendent for permission to employ such person in the acting capacity,” stated the enabling resolution.

Thomas was appointed as acting superintendent for

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Park committee suggests bike lane across school property

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — In the future, the city may have a new park on Lafayette Street with tennis and basketball courts, open lawn space and a fountain — but it still may lack a safe route for bicyclists to reach it.

At a July 9 meeting of the Lafayette Street Park Advisory Committee, Chairman Mike Jones suggested the committee approach the

Cape May City Elementary School Board of Education with the idea of making a small section of its property available for a bike lane in front of the school, stretching from the Madison Avenue intersection to the park.

Councilman Shaine Meier said the county had to be pushed to complete the safe route to school project, which he termed as “nearly impossible” due to the intersection of Madison Avenue and Lafayette Street.

Meier suggested the county widen Lafayette Street in front of the school.

“If there’s an agreement between the school board and the city and county to widen that road, let’s take the bull by the horns and do it right now while we can get this back into the design phase,” Jones said.

The county plans to repave Lafayette Street in the next two years.

Committee member Hillary Pritchard said the school

needs a safe place for students to be dropped off and picked up by their parents. She said a safe route to school would end at Madison Avenue and Lafayette Street.

Committee member Sharon Lee Kustra, who is also a school board member, said the school has a 6-foot-wide sidewalk it does not need. Jones said a bike lane could be run all the way down to the park.

Meier noted 6 to 8 feet of grass exists between the

sidewalk and the fence of the playground area of the park.

Tom Thornton, the city’s contracted engineer, said his firm’s traffic engineer was not looking at a bike route issue for the park. He noted bicyclists need a lane to get to the park but they also need a lane to leave the park.

He questioned having a bicycle lane on one side of the road. Jones said the park could be exited onto Broad Street.

“Ideally, you want a bike

path where your bikes can go in both directions,” Thornton said.

Meier said having safe routes to the park was part of the park project. Jones said a having a bike lane in one direction into the park is “better than nothing.”

Committee member Mark LeMunyon, who is also a school board member, said the traffic situation on Lafayette Street was frightening to

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