



Many in region not on their best behavior

Page A6



House of the week

B1



166th YEAR NO. 34 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2020 \$1.00

County's second homes skew census data

Seasonal-property owners should inform bureau no one living there

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

Cape May County, where 60 percent of homes were vacant April 1, is a tough place to gather data for the 2020 U.S. Census.

As of last week, only 30 percent of Cape May County households had completed the census — well below the statewide completion rate of 64.9 percent.

A major cause of this could be people with multiple homes confused about which address they should use when responding to the

census, according to U.S. Census Bureau Regional Director Jeff Behler.

He said if a person owns a seasonal or vacation home where they do not live and sleep most of the time, and they know that no one else usually lives there, they can respond online or by phone and answer “no” when asked if they or anyone else was living or staying at that address April 1, he said.

Doing this will not only help the census be more accurate and ensure that everyone is counted only once and in the right place, but it also

means that a census taker does not have to follow up in person, according to Behler.

He said the county's response rate looks better when calculating that 60 percent of homes were vacant April 1 and the self-response rate was 30 percent.

“A lot of people don't think about filling out the census for their shore home or every property that they own,” Behler said.

If you own a primary home elsewhere and a second home in Cape May County, ideally you would fill out a census form for both homes,

he said.

For their primary home, the owner would provide all the names of those who reside in the home, Behler said. For the secondary home, the owner would state that zero persons reside or stay in the home. Online, a screen will pop up allowing the homeowner to check off “second home” or “rental property.”

When no response is received for a second home, a census worker will knock on the door or talk to a knowledgeable source in the area who will verify the dwelling is a

second home.

Why should the owner of a second home care if their house is counted in the census? The number of congressional representatives in New Jersey will be based on the 2020 Census results.

“If people don't get counted, if there is an undercount in New Jersey, that means there are going to be less congressional representatives,” Behler said.

The state will use census data to draw voting precincts and school

See **Second homes**, Page A8



U.S. Coast Guard photo by Seaman Grimaud Kouwenaar

USCG rescues sea turtle

Petty Officer 3rd Class Mason Sanders and Petty Officer 2nd Class Carliene Lyon work to free a sea turtle entangled in a fishing trap line while Fireman Jason Breckner assists Aug. 13 near Cape May. The crew from Coast Guard Cutter Shearwater noticed sharks swarming as they arrived on scene and immediately launched their small boat to help the turtle free.

HPC: City should hire inspector to force compliance

Council wants position self-funded

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Some homeowners may receive approval from the city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) for renovations or major changes to their historic home but during the reconstruction process, ignore the HPC's orders.

The HPC is suggesting the city hire a code compliance officer to inspect properties to prevent this from happening.

During a virtual City Council meeting July 6, HPC Chairman Warren Coupland offered a draft ordinance to create such a position.

He said there was no position in the city's Construction Office that was charged with inspecting work approved by the HPC. Inspections have been done on an ad hoc basis, Coupland said.

“If I see something that doesn't seem to conform to something that the HPC approved, then I go to the Construction Office and advise them,” he said. “They have been really cooperative and helpful and they take appropriate action.”

Coupland said on some occasions, the Construction Office will ask him to go to a job site to inspect work that appears to be out of sync with the HPC's approval process.

“This is the way it has been working for years, but for a National Historic Landmark City, it's not very effective and it's certainly not comprehensive,” he said.

The HPC wrote a job description that could be assigned to someone in the Construction Office who would inspect job sites to ensure the work conforms with approvals received from the HPC, Coupland said, adding that the job would not be a full-time position.

Mayor Chuck Lear asked how the position would be funded and suggested fees to HPC applicants.

City Manager Jerry Inderwies said fire inspections are funded by user fees. He said a stipend of \$9,500 was included in this year's city budget for an HPC compliance officer.

Coupland said HPC fees

See **HPC**, Page A2

Rotary Park upgrades in the works in Lower

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township's Rotary Park is an underutilized park in front of the Municipal Utilities Authority headquarters on Bayshore Road seen mostly by motorists zooming by at 45 mph. The township has a major upgrade for the park in the planning stages.

At an Aug. 17 Township Council meeting, Township Manager Jim Ridgway said the engineering firm of Mott MacDonald will delineate wetlands on the property and create a subdivision plan with

parking. Mott MacDonald will apply for state Department of Environmental Protection permits and the project will be put out to bid, he said.

Playground equipment will be provided for 3- to 5-year-olds and another for 5- to 12-year-olds, as well as a new pavilion, Ridgway said. The existing pavilion will be demolished.

Ridgway said the project will be funded by a \$400,000 grant. Wetlands will be delineated in order to create a walking trail into the woods, he said.

In other business, council

See **Rotary Park**, Page A5

Cape May Point may ban swimming pools

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The swimming pool under construction at a home at Oxford Avenue and East Lake Drive has reportedly been draining 'putrefied' water into Lake Lily in Cape May Point.

CAPE MAY POINT — Borough Commission is considering new legislation to limit or prohibit construction of swimming pools after a pool excavation reportedly sent filthy water from a property into Lake Lily.

During a Cape May Point Environmental Commission meeting Aug. 12, Commissioner Bob Mullock reported a property at Oxford Avenue and East Lake Drive, where a pool excavation took place, had been draining water into a storm sewer that empties into Lake Lily.

He described the water as having been “putrefied” on the site. He said the borough has been working to stop the

flow of water.

Mullock said it was a shame to have water from the property flowing into the lake in such a beautiful condition.

Borough solicitor Brock Russell was preparing a cease-and-desist order for the swimming pool project, Mullock said. He said the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) visited the property and stated the drainage into Lake Lily was not appropriate. Mullock said the DEP cannot issue a stop order for the project.

The borough must have regulations in place, he said, adding that swimming pool construction is an area of weakness the borough runs into frequently.

See **Point**, Page A4

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