



Caper Tigers football starts undefeated

Page A10



House of the week

B1



168th YEAR NO. 37 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2022 \$1.00

City shifts into gear on speed limit reduction

Ordinance would drop top speed to 20 mph on nearly all municipal streets

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council voted 4-1 to introduce an ordinance to establish a maximum speed limit of 20 mph on municipal roads throughout the city. At a Sept. 6 council meeting, Deputy Mayor Stacy Sheehan, who cast the lone negative vote, said the ordinance referenced a traffic study. “I’ve never received a traffic study,” she said.

City solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said an engineering and traffic investigation was conducted by the city manager’s office in coordination with the police department. “We didn’t hire a consultant to do this, but we have a lot of intelligence locally that was relied on,” he said. Gillin-Schwartz said his understanding is the proposed speed limit reduction was driven by common sense. He said the city was never a “perfect grid town.”

Sightlines can be reduced for a driver traveling at more than 25 mph, Gillin-Schwartz said. He said federal traffic statistics indicate lowering the speed limit by 10 mph drastically reduces the risk of someone being struck by a vehicle. Sheehan said she believes a traffic study must be conducted before the city lowers speed limits. “I don’t think it’s common sense to lower the speed limit,” she said. “I think it’s common

sense that we enforce the speed limit we have because lowering the speed limit doesn’t stop people from going over the 25 that they are doing now.” She noted the city could not lower the speed limit on Lafayette Street, where possibly the most speeding is taking place, because it’s a county road. “By reducing the speed limit, we’re not solving the problem of speeders,” Sheehan said. “The only way we solve the problem with speeders is enforcement.”

Councilman Mike Yeager said enforcement would not change the behavior of visitors to Cape May but could do so for local residents. If 10 percent of drivers followed a lower speed limit, the town would be safer, he said. Yeager said 20 mph is markedly different than 25 mph in the extent of injuries that a pedestrian or bicyclist may suffer if hit by a car. “Enforce it at 20 (mph) and

See Speed limit, Page A4

Mullock says city rejected plan for Iona hotel zone

Mayor says same rules apply to major and minor projects

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Following Iona Resort’s public presentation of plans for a seven-story, 160-room hotel on the site of the former Beach Theater, Mayor Zack Mullock said he has gotten a lot of feedback. Eustace Mita, chairman and CEO of Iona Resorts, is requesting the property be deemed a redevelopment zone, which could expedite approvals at the state level. The project is likely to require a permit from the Department of Environmental Protection due to its proximity to the ocean. “I do want to say publicly this council has said ‘no’ to redevelopment to the developer himself, and I know that really hasn’t been said,” Mullock noted. “That was through our attorney to his attorney, that was almost a year ago now.” He said City Council wants what is fair. He questioned a developer not having to seek approvals from the Historic Preservation Commission or planning and zoning boards because a property is declared a redevelopment zone. “If you close your eyes and walk around Cape May and you look at what our town is, the value of our

town, the uniqueness of our town, you have to thank the volunteers that are on those boards,” he said. “They have helped make what Cape May is today.” “To be asked to not go to those boards, to me, is a nonstarter,” Mullock said. “Those boards are good people, they are the voice of the community, they are how the community decides what happens in the future of our town.” He said he is uncomfortable with decisions being made by City Council instead of the boards and commissions and made out of the view of the public. During his presentation, Mita refuted claims that a project in a redevelopment zone would not require approvals from the planning and zoning boards. The Taxpayers Association of Cape May released a statement noting the state Legislature created the Redevelopment Zone model to help urban centers provide affordable housing and then later to encourage developers to help replace vast tracts of devastated land with commercial viability to restore those blighted urban centers. “The Redevelopment Zone comes with the ability

See Mullock, Page A5



Provided

Solemn ceremony on 9/11

Members of the Army National Guard 253rd Transportation Company stand guard during Lower Township’s Patriot’s Day event Sept. 11. The ceremony included township officials and first responders.

Dial 988 for live mental support

By CRAIG D. SCHENCK
Cape May Star and Wave

Mental health professionals in all 50 states celebrated last month as the nationwide 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline went live, providing a simple way for those struggling with emotional challenges to reach assistance. The 988 Lifeline connects those seeking help via call, text or chat with a counselor to assist with issues related to addiction, anxiety, depression, PTSD, self-harm, suicidal thoughts and more. The service also assists those who are concerned for the well-being of a loved one who may need emotional support. The national network of local crisis centers provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress. This service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week in the United States and has phone service in English and Spanish. The network also provides tele-interpreters service in more than 150 languages. Marc Hurvitz, vice president of NAMI Atlantic/Cape May (nami-acm.org, (800) 950-6264), said it was

See Dial 988, Page A3

Cape May hires engineer to design expansion of desalination plant

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council voted 4-1 to award a contract to CME Associates to serve as a water projects engineer for the expansion of the city’s desalination plant and related water system improvements. The enabling resolution noted CME Associates demonstrated experience in water project engineering and management and its proposal incorporates partnership with Triad Associates, of Vineland, which has recognition for expertise in grant funding,

public project financing and state and federal program administration. In answering the city’s request for qualifications, CME Associates stated it has 270 professionals and staff working in eight offices including one in Cape May Court House. David J. Samuel will be the primary engineer for the project. According to CME Associates, Samuel has 45 years of professional engineering experience and has represented municipalities, county commissions and authorities in New Jersey since 1983.

At a Sept. 6 council meeting, Deputy Mayor Stacy Sheehan, who cast the only “no” vote, said the city should find an engineering firm that has experience with desalination plants. Councilman Shaine Meier said the team of CME Associates and Triad Associates has the resources to obtain grant money for the \$30 million project. “This application is so favorable because of all the people that we supply water to,” he said. Councilman Mike Yeager said he has a degree in mechanical engineering and is somewhat familiar with the process of

rebuilding a reverse osmosis water plant. He said CME has completed engineering for very high filtration plants. Yeager said a desal plant uses finer filters, higher pressure and heavier pipe. “They have the engineering skills to do exactly that,” he said. “They are just going to raise the level of the equipment that they are using.” It’s possible to have a desalination consultant look at plans created by CME Associates, if necessary, Yeager said, adding the design is not that complicated and uses “parts off the shelf.”

Councilwoman Lorraine Baldwin said she has confidence in the firm. Sheehan said the city has two reverse osmosis (RO) units at the desal plant. She said CME proposes making use of the parking lot next to the plant for a new building and installing three RO units and demolishing the two existing units. “It only give us a 50 percent increase for \$30 million,” Sheehan said. She suggested the city should revamp its two ROs and add onto

See Desalination, Page A4

NAILED IT. Rusty Nail

The Rusty Nail is back! Our famed surfer bar and restaurant is back open for the 2022 season. Stop by for breakfast, lunch and dinner—as well as delicious cocktails and the coldest draft beer in Cape May (as verified by Exit Zero Magazine).

205 BEACH AVE, CAPE MAY • RUSTYNAILCAPEMAY.COM • WALK-INS WELCOME

