

Beach replenishment under way in Cape May, Point

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers beach replenishment project was scheduled to begin here this week using sand moved by dump trucks instead of a dredge.

Deputy Mayor Anita vanHeeswyk said she met last week with representatives of the Army Corps, state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Nature Conservancy, the city of Cape May and the contractor for the project.

The beach renourishment takes place every four years. She said she has been working with the DEP and the Army Corps for 12 years.

"This is the first time instead of dredging from borrow areas offshore that our sand will be back-passed from the far end of the state park to St. Pete's Beach," vanHeeswyk said.

Cape May will receive sand at the cove from the adjacent berm.

"It was jokingly mentioned there also won't be

an issue with munitions being pumped onto our beach and that has been a problem before," she said.

World War II bombing range artifacts are still located in the deep. The sand will be filtered before leaving the borrow site, vanHeeswyk said.

Cape May Point will receive 50,000 cubic yards of sand pending a survey of the borough's needs. She said the borough could possibly receive a larger quantity of sand.

A 50-year agreement with the Army Corps replenishes beaches to a template created years ago, vanHeeswyk said.

"Sand will be driven by truck along the beachfront and placed beginning at

the west end of St. Pete's Beach in 100-foot sections at a time and bring it to a 1:15 berm," she said. "They have estimated 50 truckloads a day, running eight hours a day, beginning every day at 7 a.m., which is approximately every 10 minutes."

The goal of the Army Corps is to place 5,000 cubic yards of sand per day with a project time of approximately 10 days.

"The trucks will be making a big racetrack loop back and forth," vanHeeswyk said.

She advised against going on the beach while the replenishment was underway. Extra sand will be placed temporarily over groins, so there is no damage from trucks. Four Cape

May Point beach entrances will be blocked: Lehigh, Whilden, Coral and St. Pete.

The Army Corps will also clean out Cape May Point's "duck bill" outfall pipes, vanHeeswyk said. The borough's portion of the beach replenishment should be completed in early December, she said.

VanHeeswyk said replenishment for Cape May is scheduled to end around Feb. 14 with a drop-dead date of March 1, due to the return of piping plovers to the beach.

Normally, Cape May Point's portion of the replenishment costs in the range of \$100,000, she said, but this project will cost only \$30,517.

"It's a huge difference in

needing a dredge and not needing a dredge," vanHeeswyk said. "That's why back passing is such a good solution for us."

Two beaches in Cape May Point that have beach-saver reefs currently have too much sand. She said the Army Corps cannot redistribute that sand at this time since the bids specifications were issued some time ago.

The Army Corps may consider the work for the next replenishment, vanHeeswyk said. She said she asked the DEP representative if the state could help remove that sand.

"I was told the state is completely out of money until the next fiscal year which starts July 1, 2021," vanHeeswyk said.

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CAPE MAY — If approved by City Council, beachgoers would be able to purchase seasonal beach tags on a smartphone app.

At a Nov. 4 virtual council meeting, City Manager Jerry Inderwies said the city has discussed the sale of beach tags through a smartphone app called Viple, to give the public an easier way to purchase the tags. He said the city's tax collector, Deborah Lindholm, researched the app.

"They are used up and down the Jersey shore for

the electronic sale of beach tags," Inderwies said. "We are thinking for 2021, we would just limit that to seasonal tags only to kind of get our feet wet, see how it works out."

He said fees charged for beach tag purchases would be paid by the consumer, costing the city of Cape May nothing.

A QR code would appear in the customer's phone which would be scanned at a beach tag kiosk and a tag would given to the customer by beach tag personnel, Inderwies said.

"It also gets us headed towards other pieces of city

Gatherings discouraged

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important to think about community levels of COVID in the area as well as from where the visitors are originating, Downham said.

"It's always safer to get together outside right now because there is increased airflow," she said. "If you are able to set up a Thanksgiving table or have social distanced seats for different family members outside, that's really your best bet," she said. "You could do firepits, you could do outdoor heaters if the weather's cold, blankets."

Now is the time to draw on creativity and innova-

tion because the holiday traditions are important to mental resiliency, she said.

"It's important that we find ways to do them safely, so that we can still remain socially engaged, so that we can still have the comfort of our family members without putting any of our family members at risk," Downham said.

She said it is important to think about those who are the most susceptible to COVID, those who have underlying health issues and older people. Families may want to consider having a virtual Thanksgiving celebration with those individuals or make sure they stay outside and stay 6 feet away with everyone wearing a mask.

"Obviously, when we eat Thanksgiving dinner, we are not wearing a mask and that makes it even more important for people to be physically distanced and outside when we get together," Downham said.

It's important to not have gatherings with so many people that physical distancing is not possible. And while it may be easier to serve Thanksgiving dinner buffet style, it is not a good idea, Downham said.

She recommends single-serve food or someone with a mask dishing out portions onto people's plates. She also suggested skipping the communal salad bowl.

Downham said hosts should ask people if they have been staying home, wearing a mask, not attending gatherings and maintaining social distancing and staying away from those who have COVID-19 before inviting them.

If transporting a guest by car, Downham recommends everyone in the vehicle wear a mask. She recommends those who plan to visit others quarantine for two weeks before Thanksgiving.

The quarantine would have to be total since even going to the grocery store presents a risk of COVID-19, Downham said.

"It's really best not to

government that we can also have electronic payment methods for which I think the public desires to get us into the 21st century," Inderwies said.

A \$2.17 fee would be charged to the consumer for a seasonal beach tag. He said consumers would still be able to order by mail and pay by check.

A postage and handling fee of \$4.99 is added when consumers order a beach tag by mail from the city, Inderwies said.

Deputy Mayor Patricia Hendricks, who is a real estate broker, said she hears stories of visitors

who have purchased a seasonal beach tag in advance of their visit but forget to bring it to Cape May. She said the phone app would be a solution to that problem.

According to the Viple website, the beach tag app is in use in Avalon, Asbury Park, Barnegat Light, Longport, Ocean Grove, Sea Bright, Sea Isle City, Stone Harbor, and other towns. Users must have an iPhone 4S or higher in order to make a purchase. The app works on most Android devices and can be downloaded free from iTunes or Google Play.

mingle households and overnight guests from people that are outside of the community at this time," she said.

Separate bedrooms and bathrooms should be used for guests, she said.

"I recommend wearing a mask whenever you'll be interacting with people outside of your household and if you can eat meals outside, that would be best since your masks would be taken off at that time," Downham said.

She said there are always safe alternatives to allow holiday celebrations.

How do you handle those persons in your life that have little or no fear of the virus or perceive it as a hoax?

"All you can really do for those individuals is just go over the facts," Downham said. "At this point in the pandemic, each and every one of us knows somebody that has been deeply affected by COVID-19 and I think it's important that we tell the story of those that have succumbed to the disease or those who have had severe complications or those who have persevered and recovered through the disease. It's important that we make it personal and let people know how this can affect whole families."

Downham said it is important to protect the most vulnerable by making sure that everyone takes COVID-19 seriously because it can be a devastating disease.

AtlantiCare has published an online COVID-19 resource guide and offers services to businesses and organizations related to the virus. Debra A. Fox, AtlantiCare vice president of strategic planning and hospitalist medicine, said the hospital system can help exposure management and contact tracing.

She said they have provided education to organizations and businesses on COVID such as personal protective equipment and how to take it on and off without cross infecting.

"There have been multi-

ple changes over the last 10 months as it relates to standards that were first sent out from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) as they have learned more about the disease, they have modified those standards," Fox said.

AtlantiCare has done COVID-19 testing for the Atlantic County Police Academy and groups of athletes for Stockton University, she said. Fox said there is an incubation time for the virus to be detected. There are those who put themselves in a high-risk environment and then want to be tested to get some reassurance they are not infected.

She said that is not recommended because it may not allow the virus to incubate and be produced in the body at a level that can be detected.

"We had a business reach out to us recently because they were concerned about the emotional well-being of their employees," Fox said. "Aside from offering crisis support, we're able to be proactive and come on site to the workplace and bring tools and techniques and how to stay emotionally well and how to keep yourself physically healthy."

For those who are unemployed as a result of the pandemic, AtlantiCare's family resources can assist in getting access to health-care services that meets their ability to pay, she said.

Fox said AtlantiCare's Family Success Center can connect families to multiple services including childcare services, before and after school programs, daytime programs for students attending school virtually, utility bill assistance and in-home meals for persons at risk.

"They've been very successful at connecting people to other services that may not even realize that those services are available, let alone how to navigate them," she said.

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