

Wall along creek could ease flooding at Bank, Elmira

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Regular nuisance flooding along Bank and Elmira streets could be eliminated with a flood resiliency wall.

At an Oct. 29 City Council meeting, City Manager Paul Dietrich issued an annual floodplain management report to council as part of the city's Community Ratings System (CRS), which reduces the cost of flood insurance for homeowners, and as part of the city's All Hazards

Mitigation Plan. He said he updated the floodplain management plan, which includes changes in personnel in the city's Office of Emergency Management.

A hazard mitigation activity was added to the plan, Dietrich said, noting a flood resiliency wall could be built along Elmira Street and Bank Street, part of the city's capital project bond this year.

"In order to make it eligible for a potential future FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agen-

cy) project, it needs to be identified in our hazard mitigation plan," he said.

Dietrich said his report would be shared with the county Office of Emergency Management.

This year was the city's five-year recertification for the CRS program. Dietrich said Cape May would be able to maintain its Class Five Certification, which provides homeowners a 25% discount on federal flood insurance.

During public comment, resident Jules Rauch inquired about a proposed

retaining wall along Cape Island Creek, in particular along the city's Bank Street parking lot.

Dietrich said this year's budget appropriated funding for engineering and permitting for a flood resiliency wall from Cape Island Creek along Elmira Street to the rear of the Atlantic City Electric substation to the back of the Bank Street parking lot.

He said Yacht Avenue, Elmira and Bank streets receive continuous nuisance flooding from the full moon high tides and

storm events.

"We've recently completed as part of the Elmira (Street) improvements, we also did some drainage improvements in advance of the paving," Dietrich said. "The drainage system on Elmira (Street) was not connected to the drainage system on Venice (Avenue). We interconnected those two, so that we have a stormwater pump that pumped out the Venice (Avenue) side of it."

He said the stormwater pump would drain Venice

Avenue, Bank and Elmira streets. Dietrich said a tide valve was installed on an outfall pipe off Elmira Street closest to the bridge. Water had been coming up the outfall pipe and into the street.

"It will lessen the amount of flooding that Elmira Street gets until Bank (Street) overruns," he said.

Dietrich said if the retaining wall project along the creek moves forward, it would remove one of the two nuisance flood areas in the city.

Master Plan

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sory structures if they are not attached to the primary building, Hurless said.

King said a garage with a bedroom and a kitchen is not a permitted accessory use if it's detached. Hurless said it is permitted if the garage is attached to the primary structure.

Bezaire said when the

garage is attached, it must meet the setbacks of the primary structure.

King said he saw a lot of applications and that connecting structures to avoid creating a second principal use is a common theme.

City code has no definitions for service business and retail sales and services. Hurless recommended defining those as

"establishments primarily engaged in providing assistance as opposed to products for individuals, business, industry, government and other enterprises including hotels and other lodging places, personal business, repair, amusement services, health, legal and engineering and other professional services, member-

ship organizations and other miscellaneous services."

He said he would strike hotels and other lodging places defined as service businesses in his recommendations.

Planning Board Chairman Bill Bezaire said the city had nothing in its ordinance covering e-bikes and golf cart rentals. Hurless said those types of companies are not permitted uses and operate on the perimeters of Cape May.

Hurless recommended comprehensively examining and addressing the standards for the S1 and S2 districts, the beach strand. He said he inventoried uses in the district, which included restaurants, a fudge store, arcades, city beach tag sales and retail sales that should be added as permitted uses.

Outdoor seating is those zones are allowed as an accessory use, he said. He said the S2 zone, located at the east end and west end of the beaches, does not have development and no changes are needed for that district.

A proposal was discussed to eliminate parking requirements only for amusement centers in existing structures in the S1 district since parking cannot be provided in that area.

Board member Dennis Crowley said he opposed the idea because it was a piecemeal approach to parking and the board had a responsibility for comprehensive reform.

Swimming pool regulations for corner lots require both yards facing the street be treated as front yards and pools and patios may not be located in the setback or forward of the building face fronting on those streets. Hurless said he believed that was enough control to protect corner lots.

HPC rejects plans

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said.

Schultz said he thought the design of the addition was sensitive to the existing house.

HPC Commissioner Kevin Hammeran said a bump-out to the side of the house visible from the front was not consistent with HPC standards. A suggestion was made at a review committee meeting to slide the "cook's refuge" to the back of the house and turn the kitchen, so it opens to the east with an ocean view.

"When an addition is this large, regardless of how much you try to hide it, it's not going to be a key contributing structure anymore and I find that troublesome," Commissioner Janice Wilson Stridick said.

HPC solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz, reading from HPC regulations, said ad-

ditions should ideally be located in the rear of a building to minimize their impact and reduce visibility from the public right of way with additions to the side of a building located near the rear and set back a significant distance from the front facade.

During public comment, two neighbors said they had concerns about an addition to the east side of the house.

Coupland said he did not believe the proposed addition met HPC standards and would detract from the original property.

Carroll said he was sympathetic to what the owners of the home were trying to accomplish. He suggested the applicant return with a development plan with an area of plantings to hide the bump out.

Coupland said the couple could return to the HPC with a new application.

Projects

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station on a corner of Lafayette Street Park.

During public comment, former councilwoman Stacy Sheehan asked if the city was paying the fee now to the authority despite the fact the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has not approved use of the parcel of land as part of a land swap.

Mayor Zack Mullock said the city has preliminary approval from the DEP.

City solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said it was a phased fee based on progress, so the first 25 percent covers the initial mobilization, design development and the construction documents procurement phase.

"This is just to revise that payment schedule to reflect what their final proposal was

that came in at the last minute," Dietrich said.

The change delays some of the payments. The city owes \$17,500 at the beginning of the agreement, an initial mobilization fee that will incorporate the design development, construction documents and procurement phase.

Cape May will pay an additional \$17,500 following the city's acceptance of a bid for construction of the project and \$130,000 during the course of construction based on monthly billing of reimbursable construction costs plus pro-rata share of construction management fee based on billed reimbursable construction costs.

A final payment of the remaining balance of \$45,000 is to be paid upon issuance of the final certificate of occupancy.

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