

West Cape continues talks on historic signs, lamps

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — While the borough has a history as significant as Cape May's, it does little to inform the public of that fact in the form of signage or light fixtures — wouldn't it be nice to have a town clock as a gathering place?

Borough Commissioner Jack Antonicello has suggested historic street signs in 10 locations, lampposts on Broadway and a town clock

in either Wilbraham Park or at Borough Hall.

A study was conducted in 2008 of the business district that included apartments on the second floor above some businesses and looked at streetscape such as lampposts, benches and a town clock. Antonicello said the borough should establish its identity with beautification such as changing street lamps and installing signs indicating where the historic district is located, similar to in Ocean City.

At a Dec. 11 meeting, he said has been in contact with an electrical contractor who specializes in historic designs for lighting and has worked with the city of Cape May. He said the contractor is familiar with the style of lighting needed in the borough.

The lights and poles are priced at about \$5,000 each, Antonicello said, adding that he has looked at signs for historic locations similar to a marker in the Town Bank section of Lower Township.

North Wildwood has purchased markers with an installed price of \$2,500 each, Antonicello said. He said technology exists that would include a QR code on the signs to provide information to phones.

"I would love to put one at the (site of) the Moffatt House; that was the shots fired for the historic society," Antonicello said.

The Moffatt House, built six years before the birth of America in 1776, was demolished by its owner in 2005, causing outrage in the borough and West Cape May to start a Historic Preservation Commission.

Deputy Mayor George Dick said the historically correct streetlights would be a capital project and it would need to be determined whether the lighting company would handle the installation.

"The street signs, on the other hand, are a maintenance issue," he said. "We were planning anyway to

replace the street signs as a lot of our poles are bent and they are faded signs."

Dick said street signs and posts cost \$300 to \$400. He said many municipalities will seek private funding to install a town clock.

Antonicello said a 15-foot-high Howard Replica/Seth Thomas clock is available in two-sided and four-sided models at \$22,000 or \$32,000. He said the borough's finance office was researching available beautification grants for the clock.

In other business, commission discussed having a dark skies ordinance to deal with light pollution, looking at the borough's current lighting standards. Dick said they have looked at a five-page dark skies document

from Cape May.

Dark skies benefit bird migration, he said. Such an ordinance should not mandate new light regulations on existing homes but would be used for applications before the Planning Board, Dick said.

"I know living in the historic district it's difficult to find lights that are historic as well as dark sky," he said. "I have six lights that cost a lot of money that I would not want to replace because we changed the ordinance."

Mayor Carol Sabo said a dark skies ordinance would help homeowners dealing with excessive light from a neighboring property. She said new light regulations could apply to new or redeveloped properties.

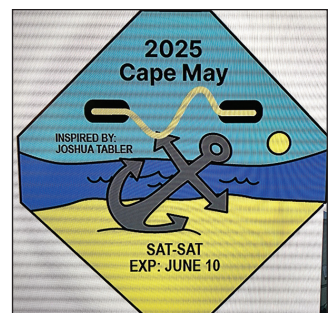
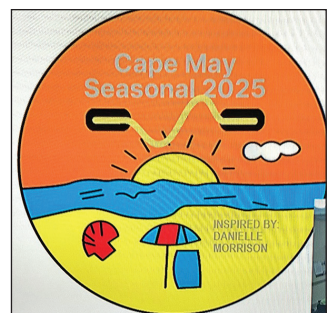
City unveils student-designed beach tags

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The designs for the 2025 beach tags, created by students, were unveiled at a Dec. 3 City Council meeting.

The winning design for seasonal beach tags was created by Danielle Morrison. Her design depicted a sunset, the ocean, a seashell and a beach umbrella.

"It's very beautiful and I think we'll be honored to see that on so many of our patrons of the beach this year," Mayor Zack Mullock said.



The winning design for beach tags for veterans and active-duty military members was created by Addison Griser. She said the tag features an American flag, a beach umbrella in

the sand, a seashell and a starfish.

The weekly beach tag was designed by Joshua Tabler. The tag shows an anchor, the beach and the ocean. Tabler said he created the

design due to the amount of boating that takes place around Cape May.

The students received a gift card from the city for their efforts and their name appears on the tags.

County urges rabies vaccinations for pets

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — This year, there have been three confirmed cases of rabies found in the county. On Dec. 9, a skunk tested positive for rabies in Erma.

"This is a reminder to all other residents to check your pet's vaccination and health records and make sure they are current," Health Officer Kevin Thomas said.

Rabies vaccination for dogs and cats offers a very high level of protection against the virus.

Rabies is a fatal disease in humans and any animal bite should be taken seriously. The rabies virus is shed in the saliva of animals that are

infected with the virus.

Those who have been bitten by an animal should wash the wound, seek medical attention immediately and notify the Cape May County Department of Health and your municipal animal control agency.

Those exposed to a rabid or suspected rabid animal must receive rabies shots as soon as possible to prevent the disease.

Owners of pets that come into contact with a wild animal must contact a veterinarian and the Department of Health right away.

"Protecting your pets by keeping them current on their rabies vaccine is an important buffer between wildlife rabies and human exposure," Thomas said. "Not only does the vaccine keep your pet safe, but it can help keep you and your family safe as well."

In addition to vaccinating pets for rabies, there are several precautionary mea-

sures residents can take to protect themselves and their pets:

— Avoid wildlife and domestic animals of which you are not familiar.

— Never feed or touch wild or stray animals, especially stray cats, skunks, raccoons, foxes, groundhogs or bats. According to the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention, bats are responsible for about seven in 10 rabies deaths among people who are infected with the rabies virus in the United States, possibly because people may not know of the risk bats pose.

Bats are of particular concern because their teeth are so tiny that a bite may not be felt or even leave a noticeable mark.

If a person has any physical contact with a bat or finds a bat in the room of a sleeping person or unattended child, the bat should be captured safely and submitted for rabies testing.

If the bat is not available for rabies testing, the person who came into contact with the animal should receive rabies prevention shots.

— Keep pets on a leash. Do not allow pets to roam; it can come in contact with rabid wildlife.

— Teach children that they should inform an adult if they were bitten or scratched by an animal.

— Call a doctor and the local health department if bitten or exposed to saliva or blood of a wild or stray animal.

— Contact a veterinarian if a pet is exposed to a bat, raccoon, skunk or other wild carnivore.

A free rabies vaccination clinic is scheduled for 1 to 2 p.m. March 21 at the Cape May Firehouse, 712 Franklin St.

Another is scheduled for 9 to 11 a.m. April 12 at the Lower Township Public Works Building, 771 Seashore Road.

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