

C.M. Council eyes mercantile license grace period

City leaving parking meters covered, may eliminate flood vent permit fees

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – City Council is considering allowing a two-month grace period for the payment of mercantile license fees in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At an April 7 meeting, Mayor Chuck Lear said mercantile license fees were due to be paid by May 1 but he suggested extending the due date to July 1.

City Manager Jerry In-

derwies said merchants have been paying the mercantile license fees. He said he believed a grace period would not be harmful as a show of compassion to the business community.

Chief Financial Officer Neil Young said the city would not be negatively impacted as long as the fees are received in 2020.

City solicitor Frank Corrado said council could make the change by passing a resolution.

Lear said parking meter kiosks around the Washington Street Mall were still wearing covers. He suggested the kiosks remain covered for the remainder of April.

“We’re essentially saying it’s free to park here,” Lear said.

Corrado said it was not necessary to pass a resolution, “just leave the covers on.”

Parkmobile has been temporarily suspended.

Lear suggested the city waive construction office permit fees for the installation of flood vents on homes until the end of 2021.

“This is something we did a couple of years ago,” he said. “We had it in place to encourage installation of flood vents.”

Deputy Mayor Patricia Hendricks said installing flood vents on a home can lower flood insurance premiums. She said while there is a cost involved in installa-

tion of flood vents, the city could eliminate the fees.

Hendricks said it also allows Cape May to demonstrate it is actively engaged in efforts to improve its resiliency for the Community Ratings Service which impacts flood insurance costs. She said so much damage can be done by the velocity of water. Flood vents open and let water flow through crawl spaces.

Construction office fees are based on the total cost

of the project.

Hendricks said when inspections are conducted of homes in Cape May without flood vents, some of the homes have moved off their pilings.

“You don’t know about it unless you go underneath your house,” she said.

Corrado said he would draft a resolution for the next council meeting,

Soldiers and Sailors, Lafayette St. parks delayed

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Work at Soldiers and Sailors Park, at the intersection of Columbia Avenue and Gurney Street, has stopped due to the discovery of deteriorated water main at the site.

Engineer Tom Thornton, of Mott MacDonald, reported to City Council at an April 7 virtual meeting. He said storm sewer construction has been completed as well as ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) curb ramps and a bicycle island but a water main on site was found to be deteriorated.

He said the city asked the contractor for a proposal to replace the water main.

The proposal was to replace the main all the way to Ocean Street. Thornton said the quote came in too high, approximately \$170,000, which was too much to authorize as a change order for the project because it exceeded 20 percent of the contract.

He said it was determined replacement of the water main could be limited to the area within the park for a cost of \$65,000.

“That raises the obvious question of what about the rest of the water main,” he

said.

His recommendation was the rest of the water main be replaced in the “not too distant future.” Work cannot resume on the site until water main is replaced, Thornton said.

The original project schedule called for roadwork around the park to be completed by April and all other park improvements in May. Another issue is a delay in receiving granite for curbs and walls, he said. Delivery of those items is eight weeks away, Thornton said.

“With eight weeks just for delivery and then another

probably four weeks, we’re probably talking about late June or early July...” he said.

Some granite curbing is expected to arrive by April 20, Thornton said.

He said his firm submitted a revised proposal for design and inspection services for the water main replacement lowering the cost from \$23,000 to \$17,800 since the scope of the replacement has been reduced.

The city applied to the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for a CAFRA (Coastal Area Facilities Review Act) per-

mit for Lafayette Street Park. Thornton said he received comments from DEP last week on the application.

“There was a list of comments that we’re going to have to address related to traffic at the site, some of the standard rules that they ask for but there are also complications with old JCP&L (Jersey Central Power & Light) projects,” he said.

The site once housed a coal-gasification plant that left widespread contamination underground and has been under remediation for more than 20 years.

Steve Morey, environ-

mental professional with Mott MacDonald, is working with a landscape architect to come up with a quick but thorough response to DEP to get the CAFRA permit application deemed complete, Thornton said.

“At this point it is apparent there has been a delay in the project due to having to respond to these things,” he said. “We’re working with JCP&L to get a quick response back.”

Completion of the park is expected to be delayed for several months, according to Thornton.

Missing documents complicate study

Beach restroom plan waiting on piling history

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Council tabled approving \$34,000 for a study from the city’s contracted engineering firm, Mott MacDonald, until April 21, to evaluate public restrooms on the beachfront and make recommendation for placement of new facilities.

At an April 7 City Council meeting, Councilwoman Stacy Sheehan requested the enabling resolution be tabled until the fall or next year. She said the city would not be building restrooms as a result of possible budgetary constraints due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Councilman Shaine Meier asked input first be received from the city’s Municipal Building and Properties Advisory Committee which is studying the issue.

A state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) public access plan is encouraging more beachfront restrooms throughout the state. Two sites in Cape May have been discussed in the past as potential sites for beachfront restrooms, Madison Avenue and Jackson Street, where pilings from an abandoned project have been in the ground for decades.

Sheehan questioned why a study of

portable restrooms used by the city on the beachfront for ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance was included. Engineer Tom Thornton said ADA compliance of those facilities was a normal starting point.

She said the proposed study only looked at the pilings at Jackson Street and did not determine the height of the pilings.

“Since these piles have already been installed, there is a limit to what we can do,” Thornton said.

He said FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) required piles in a V zone be driven so the tip of the pile was 10-feet below mean sea level. He said the piles could not be excavated to determine their length. Moisture content samples of the pilings could be taken, Thornton said.

He said he could request any as-built drawings or records from the construction office which would confirm piles were driven to their correct capacity. Sheehan said the Municipal Buildings and Property Advisory Committee was unable to find any record of the pilings in the construction office.

City Manager Jerry Inderwies said the question was whether the pilings could be used to support a restroom. Thornton said his firm would analyze

the configuration of the pilings for compatibility with the conceptual restroom building.

Deputy Mayor Patricia Hendricks said if no drawings could be found in the construction office, she questioned if the pilings were driven with permits and were they legal.

“There’s got to be a reason why they weren’t used all these years. Follow the trail,” she said.

Inderwies said he believed the piles were driven in the early 1990s. He said the search in the construction office would continue.

Thornton said when the city applies for a CAFRA (Coastal Area Facilities Review Act) permit to build a restroom, it would have to document the pilings were legally installed. Meier asked if the DEP would have record of a permit for the original installation of the pilings.

Sheehan said she believed at this time, the city should not be undertaking a restroom study with the possibility of the city having to amend its budget due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Hendricks said she would like to have the opinion of the Municipal Buildings and Property Advisory Committee.

Sheehan said she didn’t believe the committee would be happy with the content of the proposed study.

Coast Guard rescues man from sailboat 200 miles south of Cape May using rescue swimmer

Editor’s note: This report is from the U.S. Coast Guard.

CAPE MAY — The Coast

Guard reported it rescued a man from a sailboat approximately 200 miles southeast of Cape May Friday evening, April 10.

Watchstanders at Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay’s command center were notified by a crewmember on the tanker vessel Hellas Poseidon at 5:15 p.m., via satellite phone, that they overheard a distress call on VHF-FM radio channel 16, the Coast Guard said. After seeing black smoke approximately two miles from their location, the crew of the Hellas Poseidon quickly located the disabled 25-foot sailboat Serena. The crewmember on the Hellas Poseidon reported that there was one person aboard the Serena and that the sailing vessel was taking on water and had damaged communications following an electrical fire in heavy seas.

The crew of the Hellas

Poseidon could not assist the man on the Serena due to poor weather conditions, but agreed to stay with him until responders could arrive.

Aircrews aboard a HC-130 Hercules airplane and a MH-60 Jayhawk helicopter from Coast Guard Air Station Elizabeth City, North Carolina launched to assist the stricken sailboat.

Once on scene, the aircrew decided that the weather conditions made it too dangerous to lower a rescue swimmer and equipment directly onto the sailboat. The aircrew instructed the man to enter the water with a lifejacket and meet the rescue swimmer. The rescue swimmer quickly recovered him and they were safely hoisted onto the helicopter.

The man later reported that he was en route from North Carolina to New York and was caught in a storm that caused flooding and an electrical fire.

There were no reported injuries.

“We would like to applaud the crew of the Hellas Poseidon,” said Chief Warrant Officer Dan Capestany, command duty officer during the case. “They not only quickly reported the distress call, but were able to locate the sailboat and make sure the man was safe until we arrived. The actions of the Hellas Poseidon undoubtedly saved the man’s life. This sailor was lucky that someone heard his distress call since he was so far out in the open ocean. It demonstrates the need for proper safety equipment, amongst which are a registered EPIRB and life raft.”

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DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
15	2:54	3:40	9:16	9:23
16	3:59	4:44	10:17	10:26
17	4:59	5:39	11:11	11:23
18	5:51	6:24	11:58	
19	6:36	7:04	12:13	12:38
20	7:17	7:40	12:57	1:14
21	7:55	8:15	1:38	1:48
22	8:32	8:48	2:16	2:20

MOON PHASES
New moon: April 23, first quarter: April 30

CITY OF CAPE MAY RECYCLE COLLECTION NEW SCHEDULE

Due to the COVID virus, the City of Cape May Public Works Department has changes to the recycle collection schedule.

RESIDENTIAL AND BUSINESS RECYCLE COLLECTION WILL BE COLLECTED EVERY OTHER WEEK.

No collection week April 13 to April 24.
Recycles will be collected MONDAY, APRIL 20 TO FRIDAY, APRIL 24, 2020.

THE RECYCLE DROP-OFF CENTER IS OPEN: Monday thru Friday – 8:00 am to Noon Closed Saturday and Sunday

Curbside Leaf & Grass pickup starts April 15th, 2020

CITY OF CAPE MAY PUBLIC WORKS
830 Canning House Lane, Cape May, NJ 08204 609-884-9570