

Cape May Point targets invasive plants, insects

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The borough's Environmental Commission has set its sights on the removal of invasive species of plants and being on the lookout for the destructive spotted lantern fly.

During a virtual meeting April 14, Environmental Commission member Paula Massanari said borough residents are being asked to look for eggs of the spotted lantern fly on trees on their properties. The insects are more prevalent in Pennsylvania but can travel in plants brought in from other locations and are particularly dangerous to grapevines and apple trees.

A video to help identify the pests is available at extension.psu.edu/spot-

ted/lanternfly.

Spotted lantern flies are attracted to the Tree of Heaven. Environmental Commission member Emelia Oleson asked if the borough has plans to remove the trees from borough property.

Environmental Commission Chairwoman Barbara Bassett said Tree of Heaven must be removed in the fall.

"Trees of Heaven are insidious. If you try and cut them down now, that's when all the sap is coming up into the tree. They will just send out these shoots and not only do they send out shoots, they send out poison near the shoots and they will kill other plants nearby," she said.

The commission is also concerned with an invasive species called knot weed. Bassett said in Eng-

land, its roots are treated as hazardous waste. Knot weed is growing in dunes near Alexander Avenue beach near a stand of Tree of Heaven, she said.

Environmental Commission member Sandra Allison said June was the time of year to remove knot weed by mowing it as low as possible and covering it with a heavy tarp or mulch as an alternative to using chemicals.

Bassett said the commission was recommending the borough remove Trees of Heaven and knot weed in the dunes.

Borough Commissioner Catherine Busch said she needed to make sure permits were not needed to remove the invasive species from the dunes. She said lesser celandine was spreading in the borough.

While lesser celandine produces a pretty yellow flower, it will carpet an area to the exclusion of any other plants, Busch.

"If you get it in your

yard, it will eventually smother anything else that you might want to be growing there," she said. "It's very hard to get rid of because it has tubers, you have to get every bit of it up."

Lesser celandine also spreads by bulbils which hang under the flowers. Busch said she suspected it was spreading through Cape May Point due to landscaping companies cutting and spreading the seeds.

The invasive plant should not be composted or placed in lawn waste and should be placed in the trash in black plastic bags.

The Environmental Commission discussed recommending to Borough Commission the removal of invasive plants in the center section of Pavilion Circle and replacing it with native vegetation. Bassett said invasive species were growing near the pump house.

She said the flower beds

looked nice along the outer perimeter of Pavilion Circle. Allison said ivy including poison ivy was present in the center section.

Bassett said the invasive species first had to be identified and determined if that was a project that could be handled by the Public Works Department. Allison said the easiest method may be to attack the bed with a front-end loader and "start from scratch."

Busch said an Environmental Commission subcommittee needed to make a field trip to Pavilion Circle to identify the invasive species.

She said there has been a tradition in the borough of the Taxpayers Association financially supplementing a group known as the "Bedfellows" that maintain the flower beds in the circle.

"Personally, I would love it if we could create some kind of volunteer invasive squad but there are

some liability issues possibly to consider," Busch said.

In other business, Busch reported she had been in communication with Clean-Flo to service the aerators in Lake Lily and advise the borough on their products for muck and algae reduction.

She said Clean-Flo uses natural products rather than herbicides and algicides.

Bassett said using natural products on the lake was the preferable method to deal with muck and algae.

The borough received its annual notification about a precautionary zone on Alexander Beach which is not to be raked until much later in the season if at all for the potential of beach nesting birds and Sea-beach Amaranth, a threatened plant species.

"If either of those show up, then Fish and Wildlife will rope off that area more," Busch said.

EMS response times

Continued from Page A1

the 1970s indicated response time should be under eight minutes at least 90 percent of the time.

Conrad said the study was made before the advent of automated external defibrillators (AED) and their widespread availability.

Mayor Frank Sippel said the township issued a request for proposals to see if any private companies were interested in bidding to provide emergency medical services with a due date of March 26. He said the township did not receive any bids. Sippel said Laffey is in

the process of rewriting the request for proposals and it will be republished.

"Concurrently, the township is also looking for other options to provide the best-quality care for all 10 sections of Lower Township," Sippel said. "It's a priority for the township. We're going to work it, we're going to get it fixed, we're just not there yet."

In other business, Laffey said council intends to continue with safety improvements for pedestrians and motorists at Schellenger's Landing. He said township officials held a Zoom meeting last week with state Department of Transportation (DOT) officials.

Laffey said the DOT is open to ideas presented by the township's contracted engineering firm, Engineering Design As-

sociates.

"We've been working with the road department and the planning department to see what we can do there to make it safer for all pedestrians in the summer season as well as the off season," he said.

Traffic calming measures under consideration include solar-powered "yield to pedestrian" signs at crosswalks, middle of the road pedestrian stop signs at each crosswalk, reducing the speed limit on the bridge entering Schellenger's Landing and thermoplastic pavement signs southbound reading "reduced speed ahead." In addition, 25 mph speed limit signs would be painted on the roadway, Laffey said.

He said he met with property owners along Route 109 for their input on improving pedestri-

an safety. Laffey said he hoped to move forward with some of the traffic calming measures before the start of the summer season.

The county will accept bids for a 90-day period beginning at the end of June for the repaving of Bayshore Road from Town Bank Road to Charles Street, he said. Laffey said the plans have been set to the state for approval.

The project would not involve detours until the final two days of the project, but traffic would be reduced to one lane for most of the project, he said. Sippel said the summer concert series at the North Cape May ferry terminal is being scheduled. He said Independence Day fireworks would also return this year.

Council approved increasing the annual retail liquor license fee from \$1,000 to \$1,200. The township has 18 consumption/bar licenses, three retail licenses and 10 club licenses.

Council approved an ordinance creating the volunteer position of chaplain to the Lower Township Police Department. The ordinance notes chaplains serve an integral role in providing comfort to members of the police department and the general public by providing emotional, social and/or spiritual aid in community policing. The position is for a member of the clergy in good standing from the religious body in which they serve.

TIDES: April 21-28, 2021				
DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
21	3:18	4:12	9:51	9:46
22	4:23	5:10	10:45	10:50
23	5:22	6:02	11:35	11:49
24	6:16	6:50		12:22
25	7:07	7:38	12:45	1:08
26	7:57	8:25	1:38	1:53
27	8:47	9:13	2:30	2:40
28	9:37	10:02	3:23	3:28

MOON PHASES
Full moon, April 27 • last quarter, May 3

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