

City Council considers controls on invasive plants

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — No one enjoys bamboo or mimosa trees popping up in their yards as a result of an invasive species growing on a neighboring property.

City Council is considering an ordinance that would allow the city to order removal of invasive plants or trees that are encroaching on neighboring properties but delayed action Aug. 18.

Environmental Commission Chairwoman Heather Bruno said the ordinance would give residents something to reference if they were experiencing an issue with a neighbor who has an invasive species that is crossing the property line.

Commission member Evelyn Lovitz said she was creating a brochure on invasive plants. She said the list of invasive plants is

very long. Bruno suggested a link on the commission's page on the city's website.

Deputy Mayor Patricia Hendricks said the Environmental Commission has been assisting the Planning Board with a list of native species that would be preferred for landscaping plans.

Bruno said the commission reviews landscaping plans for the Planning Board.

"When necessary, we add changes, things to delete or we give them other suggestions, things that we feel would be better suited for the property," she said.

Hendricks asked if City Council passed an invasive species ordinance, would the Environmental Commission include in its review process a list of invasive species to make sure nothing from the list is planted on a property. Bruno said that would be possible.

She said what property owners put on a landscape plan "is not actually what goes in because maybe it's not available or they buy from a different garden center or decide to hire a different landscaper."

City solicitor Frank Corrado asked the definition of invasive plants be made more specific in the proposed ordinance. Lovitz said an invasive is a plant not native to the place it is growing and because it is not native, it has no natural deterrents, such as insects or outperforming plants.

"It outperforms the native plants. It sucks up the water and nutrients and grows so prolifically, it chokes out native plants in the vicinity," she said.

Corrado said the ordinance could reference a list of invasive plants from the New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team. Bruno and Lovitz endorsed his suggestion.

He said property owners could access a specific list of what not to plant.

Mayor Chuck Lear asked if one of the invasive species was already growing on a property, would the homeowner be required to remove the plant or tree. Bruno said if a species such as bamboo were creeping under a fence into a neighboring yard, code enforcement could require its removal.

Lovitz said Bradford pear trees have taken over an area of North Cape May. She suggested input from the Cape May Shade Tree Commission on the proposed ordinance since trees larger than 6 inches in diameter cannot be cut down without its approval.

Councilwoman Stacy Sheehan noted property owners have planted bamboo for privacy. She asked if the property owner would be required to remove bamboo.

Lovitz said that was the case for an invasive species. Lear said some of the invasive species would be mature trees. Bruno said tree removal could incur considerable expense for a homeowner.

"I think full mature trees that are not causing a problem would be difficult to enforce that expense on a homeowner to remove it," she said.

Lear said it was important to educate the public on what to plant and what not to plant. He questioned felling mature trees. Bruno said a tree that was spreading into a neighbor's yard would need to be trimmed or cut down.

Sheehan suggested an ordinance that would be enforced only if a species invaded a neighbor's property. Lovitz said seeds from an invasive species could be carried by the wind and land anywhere. She suggested a grand-

father clause in the ordinance for trees that are not encroaching on a neighboring property or have blowing seeds.

Hendricks said the proposed ordinance offered an opportunity for the Environmental Commission to have discussion with the Shade Tree Commission and work jointly on the tree portion of the ordinance. She called for an outreach to landscapers who hold mercantile licenses in Cape May.

According to the New Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team, the state has 2,000 native plants. Six widespread invasive plants are garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed, Japanese barberry, Japanese stilt-grass, lesser celandine and multiflora rose.

It lists five landscape invasive plants: butterfly bush, Japanese clematis, Garry pear, English ivy and Chinese silver grass.

Kennedy visits Cape May area

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had a strong enough voice in Congress that was looking out for the needs of the people."

She has been endorsed by the New Jersey Education Association; a group of teachers from West Cape May Elementary School were on hand to meet her.

"I know you are working hard to know how to adapt and move to serve the families in our community," Kennedy said.

The topic of incumbent U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew was raised and his speech earlier in the week at the Republican National Convention. Van Drew was

elected as a Democrat in 2018 but switched to the Republican Party after refusing to support the impeachment of President Donald Trump.

"I think that is another example of how we need to move away from people who are serving themselves instead of doing something for Cape May County," she said.

Kennedy walked down a few doors down to the Backstreet restaurant — owned by Tony and Theresa McGlade — which due to a lack of outdoor space has been offering only takeout service during the pandemic. Theresa McGlade said the restaurant has been in operation for

20 years and they were trying to salvage the tourist season.

Kennedy said she supports the Restaurants Act, which would create a \$120 billion federal revitalization fund for restaurants affected by the pandemic. She said the act has bipartisan support.

"I think we are going to need to support particularly the small, independent restaurants and make sure they are here on the other side of the virus," she said.

West Cape May Mayor Carol Sabo, Deputy Mayor Peter Burke and Commissioner John Francis III talked with Kennedy and posed for photos.

The Trump administration has repealed more than 60 environmental regulations. Kennedy said she is enthusiastic about presidential candidate Joe Biden's "Build Back Better" initiative that focuses on how infrastructure can be built using new and better policies that would also protect the climate and region from flooding.

"That effort to increase wind energy in New Jersey is going to be key," Kennedy said. "I appreciate what Gov. Murphy is doing with the wind port in Salem County and offshore wind in the Atlantic City area, but we are going to need to be really committed to the environment and reinstating some of the things this administration has undone."

Earlier in the morning,



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Amy Kennedy, a Democrat seeking the Second Congressional District seat in the Nov. 3 election, with Bill Causey, owner of Antique Doorknob in West Cape May.

Kennedy visited the Vietnam Memorial Wall in Wildwood where she talked to members of the public about veterans issues and flooding. The remnants of Tropical Storm Laura were passing by during Kennedy's tour of the area.

Her husband, former U.S. Rep. Patrick Ken-

nedy, and children met her later in the morning as she toured the Washington Street Mall.

Kennedy also visited Congress Hall and met with owner Curtis Bashaw.

The two discussed dealing with decreased capacity

and the summer tourist season during the pandemic.

She walked the mall

and visited the Whale's Tale, Kaleidoscope, Clash and Clive and the Fudge Kitchen.

A visit to the Harriet Tubman Museum on Lafayette Street was Kennedy's next stop.

She wrapped up her tour at the Chalfonte Hotel and Dry Dock restaurant on Texas Avenue.

DOT may add bus stops in Lower Township

By JACK FICHTER

Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council approved a resolution supporting a state Department of Transportation (DOT) study that recommended increasing bus service on Route 9. Bus stops would be created north and south of Breakwater Road.

In a July 29 letter, Charles Reilly, supervisor, traffic investigations, DOT Bureau of Traffic Engineering,

stated based on a field investigation, bus stops were recommended on both the northbound and southbound sides of Route 9 with three bus stops between Route 109 and Tabernacle Road, at Heather Lane, Breakwater Road, Honeysuckle Lane and Walnut Street.

Reilly stated in order to legally establish the bus stops, the DOT was required to create a Traffic Regulation Order that required Township Council's support.

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| | A.M. | P.M. | A.M. | P.M. |
| 2 | 8:56 | 9:10 | 2:40 | 2:45 |
| 3 | 9:33 | 9:47 | 3:17 | 3:25 |
| 4 | 10:09 | 10:23 | 3:51 | 4:04 |
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